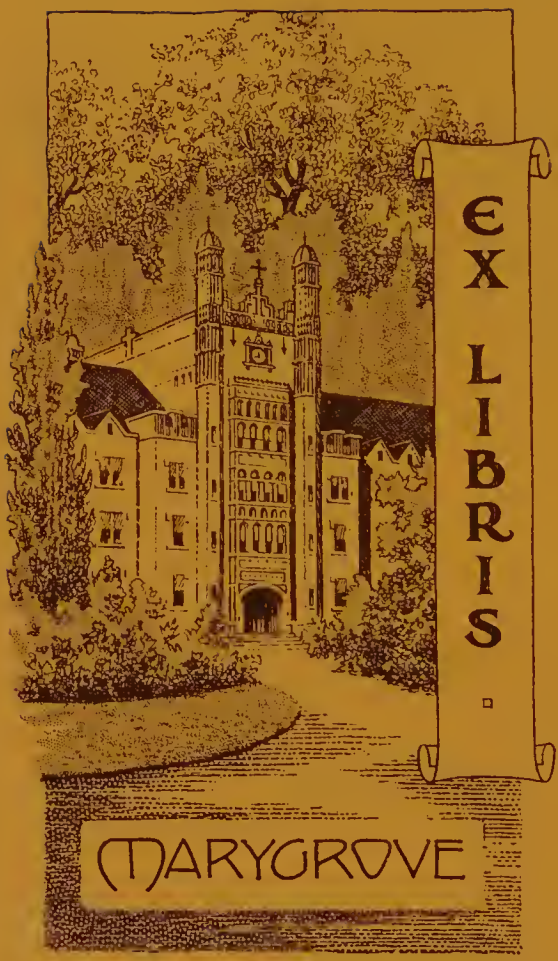
CASTLES & CHATEAUX of OLD NAVARRE

And the BASQUE PROVINCES

BY
FRANCIS MILTOUN
WITH PICTURES BY
BLANCHE McMANUS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Castles and Chateaux

OF

OLD NAVARRE

AND THE BASQUE PROVINCES

INCLUDING ALSO FOIX, ROUSSILLON AND BÉARN

BY FRANCIS MILTOUN

[pseud. of M. F. Mansfield]

Author of "Castles and Chateaux of Old Touraine," "The Spell of Normandy," "The Spell of Brittany," "Rambles on the Riviera," etc.

With Many Illustrations

Reproduced from paintings made on the spot

BY BLANCHE McMANUS

BOSTON

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Made in U. S. A.

New Edition, May, 1927

COLONIAL PRESS
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, U. S. A.

By Way of Introduction

"Cecy est un livre de bonne foy."
Montaigne.

No account of the life and historical monuments of any section of the old French provinces can be made to confine its scope within geographical or topographical limits. The most that can be accomplished is to centre the interest around some imaginary hub from which radiate leading lines of historic and romantic interest.

Henri de Navarre is the chief romantic and historical figure of all that part of France bounded on the south by the Pyrenean frontier of Spain. He was but a Prince of Béarn when his mother, Jeanne d'Albret, became the sovereign of French Navarre and of Béarn, but the romantic life which had centred around the ancestral château at Pau was such that the young prince went up to Paris with a training in chivalry and a love of pomp and splendour which was second only to that of François I.

The little kingdom of Navarre, the principality of Béarn, and the dukedoms and countships which surround them, from the Mediterranean on the east to the Gulf of Gascony on the west, are so intimately connected with the gallant doings of men and women of those old days that the region known as the Pyrenean provinces of the later monarchy of France stands in a class by itself with regard to the romance and chivalry of feudal days.

The dukes, counts and seigneurs of Languedoc and Gascony have been names to conjure with for the novelists of the Dumas school; and, too, the manners and customs of the earlier troubadours and crusaders formed a motive for still another coterie of fictionists of the romantic school. In the Comté de Foix one finds a link which binds the noblesse of the south with that of the north. It is the story of Françoise de Foix, who became the Marquise de Chateaubriant, the wife of Jean de Laval, that Breton Bluebeard whose atrocities were almost as great as those of his brother of the fairy tale. And the ties are numerous which have joined the chatelains of these feudal châteaux and courts of the Midi with those of the Domain of France.

These petty countships, dukedoms and king-

doms of the Pyrenees were absorbed into France in 1789, and to-day their nomenclature has disappeared from the geographies; but the habitant of the Basses Pyrénées, the Pyrénées Orientales, and the Hautes Pyrénées keeps the historical distinctions of the past as clearly defined in his own mind as if he were living in feudal times. The Béarnais refers contemptuously to the men of Roussillon as Catalans, and to the Basques as a wild, weird kind of a being, neither French nor Spanish.

The geographical limits covered by the actual journeyings outlined in the following pages skirt the French slopes of the Pyrenees from the Atlantic Gulf of Gascony to the Mediterranean Gulf of Lyons, and so on to the mouths of the Rhône, where they join another series of recorded rambles, conceived and already evolved into a book by the same author and artist.[1] The whole itinerary has been carefully thought out and minutely covered in many journeyings by road and rail, crossing and recrossing from east to west and from west to east that delectable land commonly known to the Parisian Frenchman as the Midi.

[1] "Rambles on the Riviera."

The contrasts with which one meets in going between the extreme boundaries of east and west are very great, both with respect to men and to manners; the Niçois is no brother of the Basque, though they both be swarthy and speak a *patois,* even to-day as unlike modern French as is the speech of the Breton or the Flamand. The Catalan of Roussillon is quite unlike the Languedoçian of the Camargue plain, and the peasant of the Aude or the Ariège bears little or no resemblance in speech or manners to the Béarnais.

There is a subtle charm and appeal in the magnificent feudal châteaux and fortified bourgs of this region which is quite different from the warmer emotions awakened by the great Renaissance masterpieces of Touraine and the Loire country. Each is irresistible. Whether one contemplates the imposing château at Pau, or the more delicately conceived Chenonceaux; the old walled Cité of Carcassonne, or the walls and ramparts of Clisson or of Angers; the Roman arena at Nîmes, or the Roman Arc de Triomphe at Saintes, there is equal charm and contrast.

To the greater appreciation, then, of the people of Southern France, and of the gallant

types of the Pyrenean provinces in particular, the following pages have been written and illustrated. F. M.

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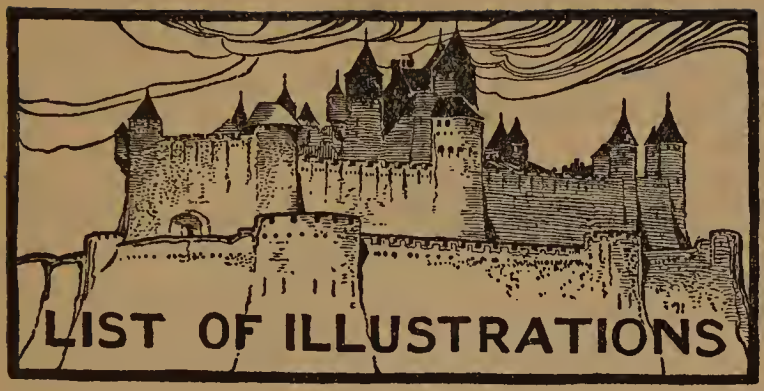

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Castles and Chateaux of Old Navarre

and the Basque Provinces

CHAPTER I

A GENERAL SURVEY

This book is no record of exploitation or discovery; it is simply a review of many things seen and heard anent that marvellous and comparatively little known region vaguely described as "the Pyrenees," of which the old French provinces (and before them the independent kingdoms, countships and dukedoms) of Béarn, Navarre, Foix and Roussillon are the chief and most familiar.

The region has been known as a touring ground for long years, and mountain climbers who have tired of the monotony of the Alps have found much here to quicken their jaded appetites. Besides this, there is a wealth of

historic fact and a quaintness of men and manners throughout all this wonderful country of infinite variety, which has been little worked, as yet, by any but the guide-book makers, who deal with only the dryest of details and with little approach to completeness.

The monuments of the region, the historic and ecclesiastical shrines, are numerous enough to warrant a very extended review, but they have only been hinted at once and again by travellers who have usually made the round of the resorts like Biarritz, Pau, Luchon and Lourdes their chief reason for coming here at all.

Delightful as are these places, and a half a dozen others whose names are less familiar, the little known townlets with their historic sites — such as Mazères, with its Château de Henri Quatre, Navarreux, Mauléon, Morlaas, Nay, and Bruges (peopled originally by *Flamands*) — make up an itinerary quite as important as one composed of the names of places writ large in the guide-books and in black type on the railway-maps.

The region of the Pyrenees is most accessible, granted it is off the regular beaten travel track. The tide of Mediterranean travel is

breaking hard upon its shores to-day; but few who are washed ashore by it go inland from Barcelona and Perpignan, and so on to the old-time little kingdoms of the Pyrenees. Fewer still among those who go to southern France, via Marseilles, ever think of turning westward instead of eastward — the attraction of Monte Carlo and its satellite resorts is too great. The same is true of those about to "do" the Spanish tour, which usually means Holy Week at Seville, a day in the Prado and another at the Alhambra and Grenada, Toledo of course, and back again north to Paris, or to take ship at Gibraltar. En route they may have stopped at Biarritz, in France, or San Sebastian, in Spain, because it is the vogue just at present, but that is all.

It was thus that we had known "the Pyrenees." We knew Pau and its ancestral château of Henri Quatre; had had a look at Biarritz; had been to Lourdes, Luchon and Tarbes and even to Cauterets and Bigorre, and to Foix, Carcassonne and Toulouse, but those were reminiscences of days of railway travel. Since that time the automobile has come to make travel in out-of-the-way places easy, and instead of having to bargain for a sorry hack to take us through the Gorges de

Pierre Lys, or from Perpignan to Prats-de-Mollo we found an even greater pleasure in finding our own way and setting our own pace.

This is the way to best know a country not one's own, and whether we were contemplating the spot where Charlemagne and his followers met defeat at the hands of the Mountaineers, or stood where the Romans erected their great *trophée,* high above Bellegarde, we were sure that we were always on the trail we would follow, and were not being driven hither and thither by a *cocher* who classed all strangers as "mere tourists," and pointed out a cavern with gigantic stalagmites or a profile rock as being the "chief sights" of his neighbourhood, when near by may have been a famous battle-ground or the château where was born the gallant Gaston Phœbus. Really, tourists, using the word in its overworked sense, are themselves responsible for much that is banal in the way of sights; they won't follow out their own predilections, but walk blindly in the trail of others whose tastes may not be their own.

Travel by road, by diligence or omnibus, is more frequent all through the French departments bordering on the Pyrenees than in any other part of France, save perhaps in

Dauphiné and Savoie, and the linking up of various loose ends of railway by such a means is one of the delights of travel in these parts — if you don't happen to have an automobile handy.

Beyond a mere appreciation of mediæval architectural delights of *châteaux, manoirs,* and *gentilhommières* of the region, this book includes some comments on the manner of living in those far-away times when chivalry flourished on this classically romantic ground. It treats, too, somewhat of men and manners of to-day, for here in this southwest corner of France much of modern life is but a reminiscence of that which has gone before.

Many of the great spas of to-day, such as the Bagnères de Bigorre, Salies de Béarn, Cauterets, Eaux-Bonnes, or Amélie les Bains, have a historic past, as well as a present vogue. They were known in some cases to the Romans, and were often frequented by the royalties of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and therein is another link which binds the present with the past.

One feature of the region resulting from the alliance of the life of the princes, counts and seigneurs of the romantic past, with that

of the monks and prelates of those times is the religious architecture.

Since the overlord or seigneur of a small district was often an amply endowed archbishop or bishop, or the lands round about belonged by ancient right to some community of monkish brethren, it is but natural that mention of some of their more notable works and institutions should have found a place herein. Where such inclusion is made, it is always with the consideration of the part played in the stirring affairs of mediæval times by some fat monk or courtly prelate, who was, if not a compeer, at least a companion of the lay lords and seigneurs.

Not all the fascinating figures of history have been princes and counts; sometimes they were cardinal-archbishops, and when they were wealthy and powerful seigneurs as well they became at once principal characters on the stage. Often they have been as romantic and chivalrous (and as intriguing and as greedy) as the most dashing hero who ever wore cloak and doublet.

Still another species of historical characters and monuments is found plentifully besprinkled through the pages of the chronicles of the Pyrenean kingdoms and provinces, and

that is the class which includes warriors and their fortresses.

A castle may well be legitimately considered as a fortress, and a château as a country house; the two are quite distinct one from the other, though often their functions have been combined.

Throughout the Pyrenees are many little walled towns, fortifications, watch-towers and what not, architecturally as splendid, and as great, as the most glorious domestic establishment of Renaissance days. The *cité* of Carcassonne, more especially, is one of these. Carcassonne's château is as naught considered without the ramparts of the mediæval *cité,* but together, what a splendid historical souvenir they form! The most splendid, indeed, that still exists in Europe, or perhaps that ever did exist.

Prats-de-Mollo and its walls, its tower, and the defending Fort Bellegarde; Saint Bertrand de Comminges and its walls; or even the quaintly picturesque defences of Vauban at Bayonne, where one enters the city to-day through various gateway breaches in the walls, are all as reminiscent of the vivid life of the history-making past, as is Henri Quatre's

tortoise-shell cradle at Pau, or Gaston de Foix' ancestral château at Mazères.

Mostly it is the old order of things with which one comes into contact here, but the blend of the new and old is sometimes astonishing. Luchon and Pau and Tarbes and Lourdes, and many other places for that matter, have over-progressed. This has been remarked before now; the writer is not alone in his opinion.

The equal of the charm of the Pyrenean country, its historic sites, its quaint peoples, and its scenic splendours does not exist in all France. It is a blend of French and Spanish manners and blood, lending a colour-scheme to life that is most enjoyable to the seeker after new delights.

Before the Revolution, France was divided into fifty-two provinces, made up wholly from the petty states of feudal times. Of the southern provinces, seven in all, this book deals in part with Gascogne (capital Auch), the Comté de Foix (capital Foix), Roussillon (capital Perpignan), Haute-Languedoc (capital Toulouse), and Bas-Languedoc (capital Montpellier). Of the southwest provinces, a part of Guyenne (capital Bordeaux) is included, also

Navarre (capital Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port) and Béarn (capital Pau).

Besides these general divisions, there were many minor *petits pays* compressed within the greater, such as Armagnac, Comminges, the Condanois, the Pays-Entre-Deux-Mers, the Landes, etc. These, too, naturally come within the scope of this book.

Finally, in the new order of things, the ancient provinces lost their nomenclature after the Revolution, and the Département of the Landes (and three others) was carved out of Guyenne; the Département of the Basses-Pyrénées absorbed Navarre, Béarn and the Basque provinces; Bigorre became the Hautes-Pyrénées; Foix became Ariège; Roussillon became the Pyréneés-Orientales, and Haute-Languedoc and Bas-Languedoc gave Hérault, Gard, Haute-Garonne and the Aude. For the most part all come within the scope of these pages, and together these modern départements form an unbreakable historical and topographical frontier link from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean.

This bird's-eye view of the Pyrenean provinces, then, is a sort of picturesque, informal report of things seen and facts garnered through more or less familiarity with the

region, its history, its institutions and its people. Châteaux and other historical monuments, agriculture and landscape, market-places and peasant life, all find a place here, inasmuch as all relate to one another, and all blend into that very nearly perfect whole which makes France so delightful to the traveller.

Everywhere in this delightful region, whether on the mountain side or in the plains, the very atmosphere is charged with an extreme of life and colour, and both the physiognomy of landscape and the physiognomy of humanity is unfailing in its appeal to one's interest.

Here there are no guide-book phrases in the speech of the people, no struggling lines of "conducted" tourists with a polyglot conductor, and no futile labelling of doubtful historic monuments; there are enough of undoubted authenticity without this.

Thoroughly tired and wearied of the progress and super-civilization of the cities and towns of the well-worn roads, it becomes a real pleasure to seek out the by-paths of the old French provinces, and their historic and romantic associations, in their very crudities and fragments every whit as interesting as the

better known stamping-grounds of the conventional tourist.

The folk of the Pyrenees, in their faces and figures, in their speech and customs, are as varied as their histories. They are a bright, gay, careless folk, with ever a care and a kind word for the stranger, whether they are Catalan, Basque or Béarnais.

Since the economic aspects of a country have somewhat to do with its history it is important to recognize that throughout the Pyrenees the grazing and wine-growing industries predominate among agricultural pursuits.

There is a very considerable raising of sheep and of horses and mules, and somewhat of beef, and there is some growing of grain, but in the main — outside of the sheep-grazing of the higher valleys — it is the wine-growing industry that gives the distinctive note of activity and prosperity to the lower slopes and plains.

For the above mentioned reason it is perhaps well to recount here just what the wine industry and the wine-drinking of France amounts to.

One may have a preference for Burgundy or Bordeaux, Champagne or Saumur, or even plain, plebeian beer, but it is a pity that the

great mass of wine-drinkers, outside of Continental Europe, do not make their distinctions with more knowledge of wines when they say this or that is the *best* one, instead of making their estimate by the prices on the wine-card. Anglo-Saxons (English and Americans) are for the most part not connoisseurs in wine, because they don't know the fundamental facts about wine-growing.

For red wines the Bordeaux — less full-bodied and heavy — are very near rivals of the best Burgundies, and have more bouquet and more flavour. The Medocs are the best among Bordeaux wines. Château-Lafitte and Château-Latour are very rare in commerce and very high in price when found. They come from the commune of Pauillac. Château Margaux, St. Estèphe and St. Julien follow in the order named and are the leaders among the red wines of Bordeaux — when you get the real thing, which you don't at bargain store prices.

The white wines of Bordeaux, the Graves, come from a rocky soil; the Sauternes, with the vintage of Château d'Yquem, lead the list, with Barsac, Entre-Deux-Mers and St. Emilion following. There are innumerable second-class Bordeaux wines, but they need not be

enumerated, for if one wants a name merely there are plenty of wine merchants who will sell him any of the foregoing beautifully bottled and labelled as the "real thing."

Down towards the Pyrenees the wines change notably in colour, price and quality, and they are good wines too. Those of Bergerac and Quercy are rich, red wines sold mostly in the markets of Cahors; and the wines of Toulouse, grown on the sunny hill-slopes between Toulouse and the frontier, are thick, alcoholic wines frequently blended with real Bordeaux — to give body, not flavour.

The wines of Armagnac are mostly turned into *eau de vie,* and just as good *eau de vie* as that of Cognac, though without its flavour, and without its advertising, which is the chief reason why the two or three principal brands of cognac are called for at the wine-dealers.

At Chalosse, in the Landes, between Bayonne and Bordeaux, are also grown wines made mostly into *eau de vie.*

Béarn produces a light coloured wine, a specialty of the country, and an acquired taste like olives and Gorgonzola cheese. From Béarn, also, comes the famous *cru de Jurançon,* celebrated since the days of Henri Quatre, a simple, full-bodied, delicious-tasting, red wine.

Thirteen départements of modern France comprise largely the wine-growing region of the basin of the Garonne, included in the territory covered by this book. This region gives a wine crop of thirteen and a half millions of hectolitres a year. In thirty years the production has augmented by sixty per cent., and still dealers very often sell a fabricated imitation of the genuine thing. Wine drinking is increasing as well as alcoholism, regardless of what the doctors try to prove.

The wines of the Midi of France in general are famous, and have been for generations, to *bons vivants*. The soil, the climate and pretty much everything else is favourable to the vine, from the Spanish frontier in the Pyrenees to that of Italy in the Alpes-Maritimes. The wines of the Midi are of three sorts, each quite distinct from the others; the ordinary table wines, the cordials, and the wines for distilling, or for blending. Within the topographical confines of this book one distinguishes all three of these groups, those of Roussillon, those of Languedoc, and those of Armagnac.

The rocky soil of Roussillon, alone, for example (neighbouring Collioure, Banyuls and Rivesaltes), gives each of the three, and the

heavy wines of the same region, for blending (most frequently with Bordeaux), are greatly in demand among expert wine-factors all over France. In the Département de l'Aude, the wines of Lézignan and Ginestas are attached to this last group. The traffic in these wines is concentrated at Carcassonne and Narbonne. At Limoux there is a specialty known as Blanquette de Limoux — a wine greatly esteemed, and almost as good an imitation of champagne as is that of Saumur.

In Languedoc, in the Département of Hérault, and Gard, twelve millions of hectolitres are produced yearly of a heavy-bodied red wine, also largely used for fortifying other wines and used, naturally, in the neighbourhood, pure or mixed with water. This thinning out with water is almost necessary; the drinker who formerly got outside of three bottles of port before crawling under the table, would go to pieces long before he had consumed the same quantity of local wine unmixed with water at a Montpellier or Béziers table d'hôte.

At Cette, at Frontignan, and at Lunel are fabricated many "foreign" wines, including the Malagas, the Madères and the Xeres of commerce. Above all the *Muscat de Frontignan* is revered among its competitors, and

it's not a " foreign " wine either, but the juice of dried grapes or raisins, — grape juice if you like, — a sweet, mild dessert wine, very, very popular with the ladies.

There is a considerable crop of table raisins in the Midi, particularly at Montauban and in maritime Provence which, if not rivalling those of Malaga in looks, have certainly a more delicate flavour.

Along with the wines of the Midi may well be coupled the olives. For oil those of the Bouches-du-Rhône are the best. They bring the highest prices in the foreign market, but along the easterly slopes of the Pyrenees, in Roussillon, in the Aude, and in Hérault and Gard they run a close second. The olives of France are not the fat, plump, " queen " olives, sold usually in little glass jars, but a much smaller, greener, less meaty variety, but richer in oil and nutriment.

The olive trees grow in long ranks and files, amid the vines or even cereals, very much trimmed (in goblet shape, so that the ripening sun may reach the inner branches) and are of small size. Their pale green, shimmering foliage holds the year round, but demands a warm sunny climate. The olive trees of the Midi of France — as far west as the Comté

de Foix in the Pyrenees, and as far north as Montelimar on the Rhône — are quite the most frequently noted characteristic of the landscape. The olive will not grow, however, above an altitude of four hundred metres.

The foregoing pages outline in brief the chief characteristics of the present day aspect of the old Pyrenean French provinces of which Béarn and Basse-Navarre, with the Comté de Foix were the heart and soul.

The topographical aspect of the Pyrenees, their history, and as full a description of their inhabitants as need be given will be found in a section dedicated thereto.

For the rest, the romantic stories of kings and counts, and of lords and ladies, and their feudal fortresses and Renaissance châteaux, with a mention of such structures of interest as naturally come within nearby vision will be found duly recorded further on.

CHAPTER II

FEUDAL FRANCE — ITS PEOPLE AND ITS CHÂTEAUX

It was not the Revolution alone that brought about a division of landed property in France. The Crusades, particularly that of Saint Bernard, accomplished the same thing, though perhaps to a lesser extent. The seigneurs were impoverished already by excesses of all kinds, and they sold parts of their lands to any who would buy, and on almost any terms. Sometimes it was to a neighbouring, less powerful, seigneur; sometimes to a rich bourgeois — literally a town-dweller, not simply one vulgarly rich — or even to an ecclesiastic; and sometimes to that vague entity known as "*le peuple.*" The peasant proprietor was a factor in land control before the Revolution; the mere recollection of the fact that Louis-le-Hutin enfranchised the serfs demonstrates this.

The serfdom of the middle ages, in some respects, did not differ from ancient slavery, and in the most stringent of feudal times there were numerous serfs, servants and labourers

attached to the seigneur's service. These he sold, gave away, exchanged, or bequeathed, and in these sales, children were often separated from their parents. The principal cause of enfranchisement was the necessity for help which sprang from the increase in the value of land. A sort of chivalric swindle under the name of " the right of taking " was carried on among the lords, who endeavoured to get men away from one another and thus flight became the great resort of the dissatisfied peasant.

In order to get those belonging to others, and to keep his own, the proprietor, when enfranchising the serfs, benevolently gave them land. Thus grew up the peasant landowner, the seigneur keeping only more or less limited rights, but those onerous enough when he chose to put on the screw.

In this way much of the land belonging to the nobles and clergy became the patrimony of the plebeians, and remained so, for they were at first forbidden to sell their lands to noblemen or clergy. Then came other kinds of intermediary leases, something between the distribution of the land under the feudal system and its temporary occupancy of to-day through the payment of rent. Such were

the " domains " in Brittany, Anjou and elsewhere, held under the emphyteusis (long lease), which was really the right of sale, where the land, let out for an indefinite time and at a fixed rent, could be taken back by the landlord only on certain expensive terms. This was practically the death knell of feudal land tenure. Afterward came leases of fifty years, for life, or for " three lifetimes," by which time the rights of the original noble owners had practically expired.

Finally, all landowners found these systems disadvantageous. The landlord's share in the product of the soil (as a form of rent) continually increased, while the condition of the farmer grew worse and worse.

Since the Revolution, the modern method of cultivation of land on a large scale constitutes an advance over anything previously conceived, just as the distribution of the land under the feudal régime constituted an advance over the system in vogue in earlier times.

Times have changed in France since the days when the education of the masses was unthought of. Then the curé or a monkish brother would get a few children together at indeterminate periods and teach them the catechism, a paternoster or a credo, and that

was about all. Writing, arithmetic — much less the teaching of grammar — were deemed entirely unnecessary to the growing youth. Then (and the writer has seen the same thing during his last dozen years of French travel) it was a common sight to see the sign "Ecrivain Publique" hanging over, or beside, many a doorway in a large town.

The Renaissance overflow from Italy left a great impress on the art and literature of France, and all its bright array of independent principalities. The troubadours and minstrels of still earlier days had given way to the efforts and industry of royalty itself. François Premier, and, for aught we know, all his followers, penned verses, painted pictures, and patronized authors and artists, until the very soil itself breathed an art atmosphere.

Marguerite de Valois (1492-1549), the sister of François Premier, was called the tenth muse even before she became Queen of Navarre, and when she produced her Boccoccio-like stories, afterwards known as the "Heptameron of the Queen of Navarre," enthusiasm for letters among the noblesse knew no bounds.

The spirit of romance which went out from

the soft southland was tinged with a certain license and liberty which was wanting in the "Romaunt of the Rose" of Guillaume de Lorris, and like works, but it served to strike a passionate fire in the hearts of men which at least was bred of a noble sentiment.

What the Renaissance actually did for a French national architecture is a matter of doubt. But for its coming, France might have achieved a national scheme of building as an outgrowth of the Greek, Roman, and Saracen structures which had already been planted between the Alps and the Pyrenees. The Gothic architecture of France comes nearer to being a national achievement than any other, but its application in its first form to a great extent was to ecclesiastical building. In domestic and civil architecture, and in walls and ramparts, there exists very good Gothic indeed in France, but of a heavier, less flowery style than that of its highest development in churchly edifices.

The Romanesque, and even the pointed-arch architecture (which, be it remembered, need not necessarily be Gothic) of southern and mid-France, with the Moorish and Saracenic interpolations found in the Pyrenees, was the typical civic, military and domestic manner of

building before the era of the imitation of the debased Lombardic which came in the days of Charles VIII and François Premier. This variety spread swiftly all over France — and down the Rhine, and into England for that matter — and crowded out the sloping roof, the dainty colonnette and ribbed vaulting in favour of a heavier, but still ornate, barrel-vaulted and pillared, low-set edifice with most of the faults of the earlier Romanesque, and none of its excellences.

The parts that architects and architecture played in the development of France were tremendous. Voltaire first promulgated this view, and his aphorisms are many; "My fancy is to be an architect." "Mansard was one of the greatest architects known to France." "Architects were the ruin of Louis XIV." "The Cathedral builders were sublime barbarians." Montesquieu was more sentimental when he said: "Love is an architect who builds palaces on ruins if he pleases."

The greatest architectural expression of a people has ever been in its Christian monuments, but references to the cathedrals, churches and chapels of the Pyrenean states have for the most part been regretfully omitted from these pages, giving place to fortresses,

châteaux, great bridges, towers, donjons, and such public monuments as have a special purport in keeping with the preconceived limits of a volume which deals largely with the romance of feudal times.

Generally speaking, the architectural monuments of these parts are little known by the mass of travellers, except perhaps Henri Quatre's ancestral château at Pau, the famous walls of Carcassonne, and perhaps Bayonne's bridges or the Eglise St. Saturnin and the bizarre cathedral of St. Etienne at Toulouse. All of these are excellent of their kind; indeed perhaps they are superlative in their class; but when one mentions Perpignan's Castillet, the Château de Puylaurens, the arcaded Gothic houses of Agde, Béziers' fortress-cathedral, the fortress-church of St. Bertrand de Comminges or a score of other tributary monumental relics, something hitherto unthought of is generally disclosed.

Almost the whole range of architectural display is seen here between the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Gascony, and any rambling itinerary laid out between the two seas will discover as many structural and decorative novelties as will be found in any similar length of roadway in France.

Watch-tower in the Val d'Andorre

Leaving the purely ecclesiastical edifices — cathedrals and great churches — out of the question, the entire Midi of France, and the French slopes and valleys of the Pyrenees in particular, abounds in architectural curiosities which are marvels to the student and lover of art.

There are *châteaux, chastels* and *chastillons,* one differing from another by subtle distinctions which only the expert can note. Then there are such feudal accessories as watch-towers, donjons and *clochers,* and great fortifying walls and gates and barbicans, and even entire fortified towns like Carcassonne and La Bastide. Surely the feudality, or rather its relics, cannot be better studied than here, — "where the people held the longest aloof from the Crown."

The watch-towers which flank many of the valleys of the Pyrenees are a great curiosity and quandary to archæologists and historians. Formerly they flashed the news of wars or invasions from one outpost to another, much as does wireless telegraphy of to-day. Of these watch-towers, or *tours télégraphiques,* as the modern French historians call them, that of Castel-Biel, near Luchon, is the most famous. It rises on the peak of a tiny moun-

tain in the valley of the Pique and is a square structure of perhaps a dozen or fifteen feet on each side. Sixteen feet or so from the ground, on the northwest façade, is an opening leading to the first floor. This tower is typical of its class, and is the most accessible to the hurried traveller.

The feudal history of France is most interesting to recall in this late day when every man is for himself. Not all was oppression by any means, and the peasant landowner — as distinct from the *vilain* and *serf* — was a real person, and not a supposition, even before the Revolution; though Thomas Carlyle on his furzy Scotch moor didn't know it.

Feudal France consisted of seventy thousand fiefs or rere-fiefs, of which three thousand gave their names to their seigneurs. All seigneurs who possessed three *châtellenies* and a walled hamlet (*ville close*) had the right of administering justice without reference to a higher court. There were something more than seven thousand of these *villes closes,* within which, or on the lands belonging to the seigneurs thereof, were one million eight hundred and seventy-two thousand monuments, — churches, monasteries, abbeys, châteaux, castles, and royal or episcopal palaces. It

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was thus that religious, civic and military architecture grew side by side and, when new styles and modifications came in, certain interpolations were forthwith incorporated in the more ancient fabrics, giving that mélange of picturesque walls and roofs which makes France the best of all lands in which to study the architecture of mediævalism. Among these mediæval relics were interspersed others more ancient, — Roman and Greek basilicas, temples, baths, arenas, amphitheatres and aqueducts in great profusion, whose remains to-day are considerably more than mere fragments.

The hereditary aristocracy of France, the rulers and the noblesse of the smaller kingdoms, dukedoms and countships, were great builders, as befitted their state, and, being mostly great travellers and persons of wealth, they really surrounded themselves with many exotic forms of luxury which a more isolated or exclusive race would never have acquired. There is no possible doubt whatever but that it is the very mixture of styles and types that make the architecture of France so profoundly interesting even though one decries the fact that it is not *national.*

One well recognized fact concerning France can hardly fail to be reiterated by any who

write of the manners and customs and the arts of mediæval times, and that is that the figures of population of those days bear quite similar resemblances to those of to-day. Historians of a hundred years back, even, estimated the total population of France in the fifteenth century as being very nearly the same as at the Revolution, — perhaps thirty millions. To-day eight or perhaps ten millions more may be counted, but the increase is invariably in the great cities, Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Rouen, etc. Oloron and Orthez in Béarn, Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port in Navarre, or Agde or Elne in Roussillon, remain at the same figure at which they have stood for centuries, unless, as is more often the case, they have actually fallen off in numbers. And still France is abnormally prosperous, collectively and individually, so far as old-world nations go.

Originally the nobility in France was of four degrees: the *noblesse* of the blood royal, the *haute-noblesse*, the *noblesse ordinaire* and the *noblesse* who were made noble by patent of the ruling prince. All of these distinctions were hereditary, save, in some instances, the *noblesse ordinaire*.

In the height of feudal glory there were

accredited over four thousand families belonging to the *ancienne noblesse,* and ninety thousand *familles nobles* (descendant branches of the above houses) who could furnish a hundred thousand knightly combatants for any "little war" that might be promulgated.

Sometimes the family name was noble and could be handed down, and sometimes not. Sometimes, too, inheritance was through the mother, not the father; this was known as the *noblesse du ventre.* A foreign noble naturalized in France remained noble, and retained his highest title of right.

The French nobles most often took their titles from their fiefs, and these, with the exception of baronies and *marquisats,* were usually of Roman origin. The chief titles below the *noblesse du sang royal* were *ducs, barons, marquis, comtes, vicomtes, vidames,* and *chevaliers* and each had their special armorial distinctions, some exceedingly simple, and some so elaborate with quarterings and blazonings as to be indefinable by any but a heraldic expert.

The coats of arms of feudal France, or *armoiries,* as the French call them (a much better form of expression by the way), are a most interesting subject of study. Some of

these *armoiries* are really beautiful, some quaint and some enigmatic, as for instance those of the King of Navarre.

The Revolutionary Assembly abolished such things in France, but Napoleon restored them all again, and created a new noblesse as well:

> *"Aussitôt maint esprit fécond en reveries,*
> *"Inventa le blason avec les armoiries."*

sang the poet Boileau.

Primarily *armoiries* were royal bequests, but in these days a pork-packer, an iron-founder or a cheese-maker concocts a trade-mark on heraldic lines and the thing has fallen flat. Fancy a pig sitting on a barrel top and flanked by two ears of corn, or a pyramid of cheeses overtopped by the motto "A full stomach maketh good health." Why it's almost as ridiculous as a crossed pick-axe, a shovel and a crow-bar would be for a navvy on a railway line! In the old days it was not often thus, though a similar ridiculous thing, which no one seemed to take the trouble to suppress, was found in the "*Armoiries des gueux.*" One of these showed two twists of tobacco *en croix,* with the following motto: "*Dieu vous bénisse!*"

At the head of the list of French *armoiries* were those of *domain* or *souveraineté.*

Then followed several other distinct classes. "*Armoiries de Pretention,*" where the patronal rights over a city or a province were given the holders, even though the province was under the chief domination of a more powerful noble.

"*Armoiries de Concession,*" given for services by a sovereign prince — such as the *armoiries* belonging to Jeanne d'Arc.

"*Armoiries de Patronage,*" in reality quarterings added to an *armoirie* already existing. These were frequently additions to the blazonings of families or cities. Paris took on the arms of the King of France, the insistent Louis, by this right.

"*Armoiries de Dignité,*" showing the distinction or dignities with which a person was endowed, and which were added to existing family arms.

"*Armoiries de Famille,*" as their name indicates, distinguishing one noble family from another. This class was further divided into three others, "*Substituées,*" "*Succession,*" or "*Alliance,*" terms which explain themselves.

"*Armoiries de Communauté,*" distinctions

given to noble chapters of military bodies, corporations, societies and the like.

Finally there was a class which belonged to warriors alone.

At all times illustrious soldiers adopted a *devise,* or symbol, which they caused to be painted on their shields. These were only considered as *armoiries* when they were inherited by one who had followed in the footsteps of his ancestors. This usage dates from the end of the ninth century, and it is from this period that *armoiries,* properly called, came into being.

Feudal Flags and Banners

The banners of the feudal sovereigns were, many of them, very splendid affairs, often bearing all their arms and quarterings. They were borne wherever their owners went, — in

war, to the capital, and at their country houses. At all ceremonious functions the banners were ever near the persons of their sovereigns as a sign of suzerainty. The owner of a banner would often have it cut out of metal and placed on the gables of his house as a weather-vane, a custom which, in its adapted form, has endured through the ages to this day. In tournaments, the nobles had their banners attached to their lances, and made therewith always the sign of the cross before commencing their passes. Also their banners or *banderoles* were hung from the trumpets of the heralds of their house.

Another variety of feudal standard, differing from either the *bannière* or the *pennon,* was the *gonfanon.* This was borne only by *bacheliers,* vassals of an overlord.

> *" N'i a riche hom ni baron*
> *" Qui n'ait lès lui son gonfanon."*

The feudal banner, the house flag of the feudal seigneurs, and borne by them in battle, was less splendid than the *bannière royale,* which was hung from a window balcony to mark a kingly lodging-place. It was in fact only a small square of stuff hanging from a transversal baton. This distinguished, in

France, a certain grade of knights known as *chevaliers-bannerets*. These chevaliers had the privilege of exercising certain rights that other knights did not possess.

To be created *chevalier-banneret* one had to be twenty-one years of age. If a chevalier was already a *bachelier,* a grade inferior to that of a *banneret,* to become a full blown *chevalier* he had only to cut the points from his standard — a *pennon* — when it and he became a *banneret;* that is to say, he had the right to carry a banner, or to possess a *fief de bannière.*

There were three classes of fiefs in feudal France. First; the *fief de bannière,* which could furnish twenty-five combatants under a banner or flag of their own. Second; the *fief de haubert,* which could furnish a well-mounted horseman fully armed, accompanied by two or three *varlets* or *valets.* Third; the *fief de simple écuyer,* whose sole offering was a single vassal, lightly armed.

There was, too, a class of nobles without estates. They were known as seigneurs of a *fief en l'air,* or a *fief volant,* much like many courtesy titles so freely handed around to-day in some monarchies.

A vassal was a dweller in a fief under the

control of the seigneur. The word comes from the ancient Frankish *gessell.*

The chevaliers, not the highest of noble ranks, but a fine title of distinction nevertheless, bore one of four prefixes, *don, sire, messire,* or *monseigneur.* They could eat at the same table with the monarch, and they alone had the right to bear a banner-lance in warfare, or wear a double coat of mail.

In 1481, Louis XI began to abolish the bow and the lance in France, in so far as they applied to effective warfare. The first fire-arms had already appeared a century before, and though the *coulevrines* and *canons à main* were hardly efficient weapons, when compared with those of to-day, they were far more effective than the bow and arrow at a distance, or the javelin, the pike and the lance near at hand. Then developed the *arquebuse,* literally a hand-cannon, clumsy and none too sure of aim, but a fearful death-dealer if it happened to hit.

The feudal lords, the seigneurs and other nobles, had the right of levying taxes upon their followers. These taxes, or *impôts,* took varying forms; such as the obligation to grind their corn at the mills of the seigneur, paying a heavy proportion of the product therefor;

to press their grapes at his wine-press, and bake their bread in his ovens. At Montauban, in the Garonne, one of these old seigneurial flour mills may still be seen. The seigneurs were not ostensibly "in trade," but their control of the little affairs of the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker virtually made them so.

More definite taxes — demanded in cash when the peasants could pay, otherwise in kind — were the seigneurial taxes on fires; on the right of trade (the sale of wine, bread or meat); the *vingtaine,* whereby the peasant gave up a twentieth of his produce to the seigneur; and such oddities as a tax on the first kiss of the newly married; bardage, a sort of turnpike road duty for the privilege of singing certain songs; and on all manner of foolish fancies.

After the taxation by the seigneurs there came that by the clerics, who claimed their "ecclesiastical tenth," a tax which was levied in France just previous to the Revolution with more severity, even, than in Italy.

Finally the people rose, and the French peasants delivered themselves all over the land to a riot of evil, as much an unlicensed tyranny as was the oppression of their feudal lords. One may thus realize the means which

planted feudal France with great fortresses, châteaux and country houses, and the motives which caused their destruction to so large an extent.

It was the tyranny of the master and the cruelty of the servant that finally culminated in the Revolution. Not only the petty seigneurs had been the oppressors, but the Crown, represented by the figurehead of the Bourbon king in his capital, put the pressure on the peasant folk still harder by releasing it on the nobles. The tax on the people, that great, vague, non-moving mass of the population, has ever produced the greatest revenue in France, as, presumably, it has elsewhere. In the days before the Revolution it was *le peuple* who paid, and it was the people who paid the enormous Franco-German war indemnity in 1871.

The feudality in France, in its oppressive sense, died long years before the Revolution, but the aristocracy still lives in spite of the efforts of the Assembly to crush it — the Assembly and the mob who sang:

"Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Les aristocrates à la lanterne!
Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Les aristocrates on les pendra!"

And the French noblesse of to-day, the proud old French aristocracy, is not, on the whole, as bad as it has frequently been painted. They may, in the majority, be royalists, may be even Bonapartists, or Orléanists, instead of republicans, but surely there's no harm in that in these days when certain political parties look upon socialists as anarchists and free-traders as communists.

The honour, power and profit derived by the noblesse in France all stopped with the Revolution. The National Assembly, however, refused to abolish titles. To do that body justice they saw full well that they could not take away that which did not exist as a tangible entity, and it is to their credit that they did not establish the new order of Knights of the Plough as they were petitioned to do. This would have been as fatal a step as can possibly be conceived, though for that matter a plough might just as well be a symbol of knighthood as a thistle, a *jaratelle,* a gold stick or a black rod.

In France a whole *seigneurie* was slave to the seigneur. Under feudal rule the clergy (not the humble *abbés* and *curés*, but the bishops and archbishops) were frequently themselves overlords. They, at any rate, en-

joyed as high privileges as any in the land, and if the Revolution benefited the lower clergy it robbed the higher churchmen.

Just previous to the Revolution, the clergy had a revenue of one hundred and thirty million *livres* of which only forty-two million five hundred thousand *livres* accrued to the *curés*. The difference represents the loss to the "Seigneurs of the Church."

With the Revolution the whole kingdom was in a blaze; famished mobs clamoured, if not always for bread, at least for an anticipated vengeance, and when they didn't actually kill they robbed and burned. This accounts for the comparative infrequency of the feudal châteaux in France in anything but a ruined state. Sometimes it is but a square of wall that remains, sometimes a mere gateway, sometimes a donjon, and sometimes only a solitary tower. All these evidences are frequent enough in the provinces of the Pyrenees, from the more or less complete Châteaux of Foix and of Pau, to the ruins of Lourdes and Lourdat, and the more fragmentary remains of Ultrera, Ruscino and Coarraze.

The mediæval country house was a château; when it was protected by walls and moats it

became a castle or château-fort; a distinction to be remarked.

The château of the middle ages was not only the successor of the Roman stronghold, but it was a villa or place of residence as well; when it was fortified it was a *chastel.*

A castle might be habitable, and a château might be a species of stronghold, and thus the mediæval country house might be either one thing or the other, but still the distinction will always be apparent if one will only go deeply enough into the history of any particular structure.

Light and air, which implies frequent windows, have always been desirable in all habitations of man, and only when the château bore the aspects of a fortification were window openings omitted. If it was an island castle, a moat-surrounded château, — as it frequently was in later Renaissance times, — windows and doors existed in profusion; but if it were a feudal fortress, such as one most frequently sees in the Pyrenees, openings at, or near, the ground-level were few and far between. Such windows as existed were mere narrow slits, like loop-holes, and the entrance doorway was really a fortified gate or port,

frequently with a portcullis and sometimes with a *pont-levis.*

The origin of the word château (*castrum, castellum,* castle) often served arbitrarily to designate a fortified habitation of a seigneur, or a citadel which protected a town. One must know something of their individual histories in order to place them correctly. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, châteaux in France multiplied almost to infinity, and became habitations in fact.

In reality the middle ages saw two classes of great châteaux go up almost side by side, the feudal château of the tenth to the fifteenth centuries, and the frankly residential country houses of the Renaissance period which came after.

For the real, true history of the feudal châteaux of France, one cannot do better than follow the hundred and fifty odd pages which Viollet-le-Duc devoted to the subject in his monumental *"Dictionnaire Raisonée d'Architecture."*

In the Midi, all the way from the Italian to the Spanish frontiers, are found the best examples of the feudal châteaux, mere ruins though they be in many cases. In the extreme north of Normandy, at Les Andelys, Arques

and Falaise, at Pierrefonds and Coucy, these military châteaux stand prominent too, but mid-France, in the valley of the Loire, in Touraine especially, is the home of the great Renaissance country house.

The royal châteaux, the city dwellings and the country houses of the kings have perhaps the most interest for the traveller. Of this class are Chenonceaux and Amboise, Fontainebleau and St. Germain, and, within the scope of this book, the paternal château of Henri Quatre at Pau.

It is not alone, however, these royal residences that have the power to hold one's attention. There are others as great, as beautiful and as replete with historic events. In this class are the châteaux at Foix, at Carcassonne, at Lourdes, at Coarraze and a dozen other points in the Pyrenees, whose architectural splendours are often neglected for the routine sightseeing sanctioned and demanded by the conventional tourists.

There are no vestiges of rural habitations in France erected by the kings of either of the first two races, though it is known that Chilperic and Clotaire II had residences at Chelles, Compiègne, Nogent, Villers-Cotterets, and Creil, north of Paris.

The pre-eminent builder of the great fortress châteaux of other days was Foulques Nerra, and his influence went wide and far. These establishments were useful and necessary, but they were hardly more than prison-like strongholds, quite bare of the luxuries which a later generation came to regard as necessities.

The refinements came in with Louis IX. The artisans and craftsmen became more and more ingenious and artistic, and the fine tastes and instincts of the French with respect to architecture soon came to find their equal expression in furnishings and fitments. Hard, high seats and beds, which looked as though they had been brought from Rome in Cæsar's time, gave way to more comfortable chairs and canopied beds, carpets were laid down where rushes were strewn before, and walls were hung with cloths and draperies where grim stone and plaster had previously sent a chill down the backs of lords and ladies. Thus developed the life in French châteaux from one of simple security and defence, to one of luxurious ease and appointments.

The sole medium of communication between many of the French provinces, at least so far as the masses were concerned, was the local

patois. All who did not speak it were foreigners, just as are English, Americans or Germans of to-day. The peoples of the Romance tongue stood in closer relation, perhaps, than other of the provincials of old, and the men of the Midi, whether they were Gascons from the valley of the Garonne, or Provençaux from the Bouches-du-Rhône were against the king and government as a common enemy.

The feudal lords were a gallant race on the whole; they didn't spend all their time making war; they played *boules* and the *jeu-de-paume*, and held court at their château, where minstrels sang, and knights made verses for their lady loves, and men and women amused themselves much as country-house folk do to-day.

The following, extracted from the book of accounts of one of the minor noblesse of Béarn in the sixteenth century, is intimate and interesting. The master of this feudal household had a system of bookkeeping which modern chatelains might adopt with advantage. The items are curiously disposed.

	Francs	Sous	Deniers
Pot de vinalgre	5	0	
Livre de l'huile d'olive	6	0	
Sac du sel	30	0	
Aux pauvre	30	0	

		Francs	Sous	Deniers
En Voyage	Pour deux laquais et la mulette		18	0
	Au valet pour boire		1	0
	À Tarbes pour la couchée de lundi	4	10	0
	Un relevé pour la mulette	8	2	6
	Un fer pour la mulette		5	0
	Aux nomades	1	10	0

Evidently " la mulette " was a very necessary adjunct and required quite as much as its master.

CHAPTER III

THE PYRENEES — THEIR GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY

One of the great joys of the traveller is the placid contemplation of his momentary environment. The visitor to Biarritz, Pau, Luchon, Foix or Carcassonne has ever before his eyes the massive Pyrenean bulwark between France and Spain; and the mere existence of this natural line of defence accounts to no small extent for the conditions of life, the style of building, and even the manners of the men who live within its shadow.

The Pyrenees have ever formed an undisputed frontier boundary line, though kingdoms and dukedoms, buried within its fastnesses or lying snugly enfolded in its gentle valleys, have fluctuated and changed owners so often that it is difficult for most people to define the limits of French and Spanish Navarre or the country of the French and Spanish Basques. It is still more difficult when it comes to locating the little Pyrenean re-

public of Andorra, that tiniest of nations, a little sister of San Marino and Monaco. Some day the histories of these three miniature European "powers" (sic) should be made into a book. It would be most interesting reading and a novelty.

Unlike the Alps, the Pyrenees lack a certain impressive grandeur, but they are more varied in their outline, and form a continuous chain from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, while their gently sloping green valleys smile more sweetly than anything of the kind in Switzerland or Savoie.

They possess character, of a certain grim kind to be sure, particularly in their higher passes, and a general air of sterility, which, however, is less apparent as one descends to lower levels. The very name of Pyrenees comes probably from the word *biren,* meaning "high pastures," so this refutes the belief that they are not abundantly endowed with this form of nature's wealth.

From east to west the chain of the Pyrenees has a length of four hundred and fifty kilometres, or, following the détours of the crests of the Hispano-Français frontier, perhaps six hundred. Between Pau and Huesca their width, counting from one lowland plain to

another, is a trifle over a hundred and twenty kilometres, the slope being the most rapid on the northern, or French, side. The Pyrenees are less thickly wooded than the Savoian Alps, and there is very much less perpetual snow and fewer glaciers.

In reality they are broken into two distinct parts by the Val d'Aran, forming the Pyrénées-Orientales and the Pyrénées-Occidentales. Of the detached mountain masses, the chief is the Canigou, lying almost by the Mediterranean shore, and a little northward of the main chain. Its highest peak is the Puigmal (*puig* or *puy* being the Languedoçian word for peak), rising to nearly three thousand metres.

For long the Canigou was supposed to be the loftiest peak of the Pyrenees, but the Pic du Midi exceeds it by a hundred metres. However, this well proportioned, isolated mass looks more pretentious than it really is, standing, as it does, quite away from the main chain. From its peak Marseilles can be seen — by a Marseillais, who will also fancy that he can hear the turmoil of the Cannebière and detect the odour of the saffron in his beloved *bouillabaise*. At any rate one can certainly see as much of the earth's sur-

THE PYRÉNÉES
ELEVATION
Adour Fl.
Gave d'Oloron
Gave de Pau
Col d'Aubisque
Col du Tourmalet
Col d'Aspin
Col de Peyresourde
Col de Portillon
Col de Puymorens
Col de Perthus
Col de Salau
Col de Port
Col de Puymaurin
Col de Mente
Col de Latrape
Col de Buhon
Col de Portet d'Aspet
Col de Portet
Col de Pailhères

face spread out before him here as from any other spot of which he has recollection.

The Pyrénées-Occidentales abound in more numerous and better defined mountains than the more easterly portion. Here are the famous Monts Maudits, with the Pic de Nethou, the highest of the Pyrenees (three thousand four hundred and four metres), with a summit plateau or belvedere perhaps twenty metres in length by five in width.

The Vignemal (three thousand two hundred and ninety-eight metres) is the highest peak wholly on French soil and dominates the famous *col,* or pass, known as the Brèche de Roland.

The Pic du Midi, back of Bigorre, is justly the best known of all the crests of the Pyrenees. Its height is two thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven metres, and it is worthy of a special study, and a book all to itself. The observatory recently established here is one of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of science. The astronomical, climatological and geographical importance of this prominent peak was already marked out on the maps of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and its glory has been often sung in verse by Guillaume Saluste, Sire du Bartas, gentilhomme

Brèche de Roland

Gascon; and by Bernard Palissy, better known as a potter than as a poet.

Towards the Gulf of Gascony the Pyrenees send out their ramifications in much gentler slopes than on the Mediterranean side. Forests and pastures are more profuse and luxuriant, but the peaks are still of granite, as they mostly are throughout the range. Grouped along the flanks of the river Bidassoa this section of the chain is known to geographers as the "Montagnes du pays Basque."

At the foot of these Basque Mountains passes the lowest level route between France and Spain, — that followed by the railway and the "Route Internationale, Paris-Madrid."

This easy and commodious passage of the Pyrenees has ever been the theatre of the chief struggles between the peoples of the Spanish peninsula and France. At Ronçevaux the rear-guard of the army of Charlemagne — "his paladins and peers" — were destroyed in 778, and it was here that the French and Spanish fought in 1794 and 1813.

The French slopes of the Pyrenees belong almost wholly to the basin or watershed of the Garonne, one of the four great waterways of France, the other three being the Loire, the Seine and the Rhône. In the upper valley of

the Garonne is the Plateau de Lannemazan. It lies in reality between the Garonne and the Adour. The Adour on the west and the Tech on the east, with their tributaries, play an important part in draining off the waters from the mountain sources, but they are entirely overshadowed by the Garonne, which, rising in Spain, in the Val d'Aran, flows six hundred and five kilometres before reaching salt water below Bordeaux, through its estuary the Gironde. Nearly five hundred kilometres of this length are navigable, and the economic value of this river to Agen, Montauban and Toulouse is very great.

Between the Adour and the Gironde lies that weird morass-like region of the Landes, once peopled only by sheep-herders on stilts and by charcoal-burners, but now producing a quantity of resin and pine which is making the whole region prosperous and content.

The source of the Garonne is at an altitude of nearly two thousand metres, and is virtually a cascade. Another tiny source, known as the Garonne-Oriental, swells the flood of the parent stream by flowing into it just below St. Gaudens, the nearest " big town " of France to the Spanish frontier.

The Ariège is the only really important

tributary entering the Garonne from the region of the Pyrenees. Its length is a hundred and fifty-seven kilometres, and its source is on the Pic Nègre, at an altitude of two thousand metres, three kilometres from the frontier, but on French soil. It waters two important cities of the Comté de Foix, the capital Foix and Pamiers.

On the west, the chain of the Pyrenees slopes gently down to the great bight, known so sadly to travellers by sea as the Bay of Biscay. From the mouth of the Gironde southward it is further designated as the Golfe de Gascogne. There is no perceptible indentation of the coast line to indicate this, but its waters bathe the sand dunes of the Landes, the Basque coasts, and the extreme northeastern boundary of Spain.

The shore-line is straight, uniformly monotonous and inhospitable, the great waves which roll in from the Atlantic beating up a soapy surf and long dikes of sand in weird, unlovely contours. For two hundred and forty kilometres, all along the shore-line of the Gironde and the Landes, this is applicable, the only relief being the basin of Archachon (Bordeaux' own special watering-place), the port of Bayonne, — at the mouth of the Adour, — the delightful

rocky picturesqueness immediately around Biarritz, and Saint-Jean-de-Luz and its harbour, and the estuary of the Bidassoa, that epoch-making river which, with the crest of the Pyrenees, marks the Franco-Espagnol frontier.

The French coast line at the easterly termination of the Pyrenees possesses an entirely different aspect from that of the west. Practically there is no tide in the Mediterranean, and the gateway between France and Spain through the eastern Pyrenees is less gracious than that on the west. The Pyrénées-Orientales come plump down to the blue waters of the great inland sea just north of Cap Créus with little or no intimation of a slope.

The frontier commences at Cap Cerbère, and at Port Vendres (the Portus-Veneris of the ancients) one finds one of the principal Mediterranean sea ports of France, and the nearest to the great French possessions in Africa.

On Cap Créus in Spain, and on Cap Bear in France, at an elevation of something over two hundred metres, are two remarkable lighthouses whose rays carry a distance of over forty kilometres seaward.

The *étangs,* Saint Nazaire and Leucate, cut

the coast line here, and three tiny rivers, whose sources are high up in the mountain valleys of the Tech, the Tet and the Aglay, flow into the sea before Cap Leucate, the boundary between old Languedoc and the Comté de Roussillon.

Off-shore is the tempestuous Golfe des Lions, where the lion banners of the Arlesien ships floated in days gone by. The Aude, the Orb and the Hérault mingle their waters with the Mediterranean here, and on the Montagne d'Agde rises another of those remarkable French lighthouses, this one throwing its light a matter of forty-five kilometres seawards.

With Perpignan, Narbonne, Béziers and Agde behind, one draws slowly out from under the shadow of the Pyrenees until the soil flattens out into a powdery, dusty plain, with here and there a pond, or great bay, of soft, brackish water, whose principal value lies in its fecundity at producing mosquitoes.

Aigues-Mortes cradles itself on the shores of one of these great inlets of the Mediterranean, and Saintes Maries on another. Little gulfs, canals, dwarf seaside pines, cypresses, olive trees and vineyards are the chief characteristics of the landscape, while inland the surface of the soil rolls away in gentle billows towards

Nîmes, Montpellier and St. Giles, with the flat plain of the Camargue lying between.

Since the Christian era began, it is assumed that this coast line between the Pyrenees and the Rhône has advanced a matter of fourteen kilometres seaward, and since Aigues-Mortes, which now lies far inland, is known to be the port from which the sainted Louis set out on his Crusade, there is no gainsaying the statement. The immediate region surrounding Aigues-Mortes is a most fascinating one to visit, but would be a terrible place in which to be obliged to spend a life-time.

Between Roussillon and Spain there are fifteen passes by which one may cross the chain of the Pyrenees, though indeed two only are practicable for wheeled traffic.

The Col de Perthus is the chief one, and is traversed by the ancient "Route Royale" from Paris to Barcelona. There is a town by the same name, with a population of five hundred and a really good hotel. It's worth making the journey here just to see how a dull French village can sleep its time away. The passage is defended by the fine Fortress de Bellegarde. It was on the Col de Perthus that Pompey erected the famous " trophy," surmounted by his statue bearing the following legend:

FROM THE ALPS TO THE ULTERIOR EXTREMITY OF SPAIN, POMPEY HAS FORCED SUBMISSION TO THE ROMAN REPUBLIC FROM EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SIX CITIES AND TOWNS.

Twenty years after, Caesar erected another tablet beside the former. No trace of either

remains to-day, and there are only frontier boundary stones marking the territorial limits of France and Spain, which replace those torn down in the Revolution.

Proceeding by the coast line, a difficult road

into Spain lies by the Col de Banyuls, just where the Pyrenees plunge beneath the Mediterranean, a mere shelf of a road.

The *cirques,* or great amphitheatres of mountains, are a characteristic of the Pyrenees, and the Cirque de Gavarnie is the king of them all. It represents, very nearly, a sheer perpendicular wall rising to a height of five hundred metres, and three thousand five hundred metres in circumference. Perpetual snow is an accompaniment of some of its gorges and neighbouring peaks, and twelve cascades tumble down its rock walls at various points. There is nothing quite so impressive in the world — outside Yosemite or the Yellowstone.

Gavarnie, its *cirque* and its village, is the natural wonder of the Pyrenees. Said Victor Hugo: *"Grand nom, petit village."* To explore the Cirque de Gavarnie is a passion with many; when you get in this state of mind you become what the touring Frenchman knows as a *"gavarniste,"* as an Alpine climber becomes an *"alpiniste."*

As for the climate of the Pyrenees, it is, for a mountain region, soft and mild; not so mild as that of the French Riviera perhaps, nor of Barcelona, nor San Sebastian in Spain, but on the whole not cold, and certainly more humid

than in the Alpes-Maritimes, on the Côte d'Azur.

Generally blowing from the northwest in winter, the wind accumulates great masses of cloud in the bight of the Golfe de Gascogne and sweeps them up against the barrier of the Pyrenees, there to be held in suspension until an exceedingly stiff wind blows them away or the sun burns them off. The French Riviera is cursed with the mistral, but it has the blessing of almost continual sunshine, while in the Pyrénées-Occidentales the wind is less strong as it comes only from the sea in the northwest, instead of from the north by the Rhône valley, and the "disagreeable months" (November, December and January) often bring damp and humid, if not frigidly cold weather with them.

The rainfall is often as much as eight decimetres per annum in the Landes, one metre in the Pyrenees proper, and a metre and a half in the Basque country. The average rainfall for France is approximately eight decimetres, perhaps thirty-two inches.

In the Pyrenees the temperature is, normally, neither very hot nor very cold. Perpignan is the warmest in winter. Its average is 15° Centigrade (59° F.), about that of Nice, whilst that for France is 6° Centigrade (43° F.).

The climate of the Pyrenees comes within the *climat Girondin*, and the average for the year is 13° Centigrade. The *climat-maritime* is a further division, and is considerably more elevated in degree. This comes from the western and northwestern winds off the sea, which, it may be remarked, almost invariably bring rain with them. At Montauban the saying is: "*Montagne claire, Bordeaux obscure, pluie à coup sur.*" In Gascogne: "*Jamais pluie au printemps ne passe pour mauvais temps.*" At Bordeaux the average summer temperature is but 29° Centigrade, at Toulouse 21.5° Centigrade and Pau about the same, with a winter temperature often 4° or 5° below zero Centigrade.

The general aspect of the region of the Pyrenees is one of the most varied and agreeable in all southern France. There is a grandeur and natural character about it that has not fallen before the march of twentieth century progress, save in the "resorts," such as Biarritz or Pau; and yet the primitiveness and savagery is not so uncomfortable as to make the traveller long for the super-civilization of great capitals. It is virgin in its beauty and varied wildness, and yet it is a soft, pleasant land where even the winter snows of

the mountains seem less rigorous than the snow and cold of Savoie or Switzerland. On one side is the great bulwark of the Pyrenees, and on two others the dazzling waters of the ocean, while to the north the valley of the Garonne, west of the Cevennes, is not at all a frigid, austere, frost-bound region, save only in the very coldest " snaps."

The ranges of foothills in the Pyrenees divide the surface of the land into slopes and valleys every bit as charming as those of Switzerland, and yet oh! so different! And the fresh, limpid rivulets and rivers are real rivers, and not mere trickling brooks, whose colouring and transparency are the marvel of all who view. The majesty of the sea on either side, and of the mountains between, makes the very aspect of life luxurious and less hard than that in the more northerly Alpine climes, and above all the outlook on life is French, and not that money-grabbing Anglo-German-Swiss commercialism which the genuine traveller abhors. He sees less of that sort of thing here in the Pyrenees, even at Pau and Biarritz, than anywhere else in southern Europe.

At Nice, Monte Carlo, Naples, Capri, along the Italian lakes, and everywhere in French,

German or Italian speaking Switzerland, one must pay! pay! pay! continually, and often for nothing. Here you pay for what you get, and then not always its full value, according to standards with which you have previously become familiar. The Pyrenees form quite the ideal mountain playground of Europe.

The Basses-Pyrénées, made up from the coherent masses of Navarre, the Basque country, Béarn, and a part of Chalosse and the Landes, contains a superficial area of seven hundred and sixty-three thousand nine hundred and ninety French acres. Its name comes naturally enough from the western end of the Pyrenean mountain chain.

Throughout, the department is watered by innumerable streams and rivulets, whose banks and beds are as reminiscent of romanticism as any waterways extant. The Adour is one of the " picture-rivers " of the world; it joins the rustling, tumbling Nive, as it rushes down by Cambo from the Spanish valleys, and forms the port of Bayonne.

The Gave de Pau commences in the high Pyrenees, in the wonderfully spectacular Cirque de Gavarnie, literally in a cascade falling nearly one thousand three hundred feet, perhaps the highest cascade known in the

four quarters of the globe, or as the French say, "in the five parts of the world," which is more quaint if less literal.

The Gave d'Oloron has its birth in the valley of the Aspe, and is a tributary of the Gave de Pau. It is what one might call pretty, but has little suggestion of the scenic splendour of the latter.

The Bidassoa is one of the world's historic rivers. It forms the Atlantic frontier between France and Spain, and was the scene of Wellington's celebrated "Passage of the Bidassoa" in 1813, also of a still more famous historical event which took place centuries before on the Ile des Faisans.

The Nivelle is a tiny stream which comes to light on Spanish soil, over the crest of the Pyrenees, and flows rapidly down to the sea at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, on the shores of the Gulf of Gascony.

The Ministry for the Interior in France classes all these chief rivers as *flottable* for certain classes of boats and barges through a portion of their length, and each of them as *navigable* for a few leagues from the sea.

Four great "Routes Nationales" cross the Basses-Pyrénées. They are the legitimate successors of the "Routes Royales" of

monarchial days. The "Route Royale de Paris à Madrid, par Vittoria et Burgos," the very same over which Charles Quint travelled to Paris, via Amboise, as the guest of François Premier, passes via Bayonne and Saint-Jean-de-Luz. It is a veritable historic highway throughout every league of its length.

The climate of the Basses-Pyrénées is by no means as warm as its latitude would seem to bespeak, the snow-capped Pyrenees keeping the temperature somewhat low. Pau and Luchon in the interior (as well as Bayonne and Biarritz on the coast) seem, curiously enough, to be somewhat milder than the open country between. The Pyrenees, though less overrun and less exploited than the Alps, are not an unknown world to be ventured into only by heroes and adventurers. They are what the French call a "new world" lively in aspect, infinitely varied, and as yet quite unspoiled, take them as a whole. This is a fact which makes the historical monuments and souvenirs of the region the more appealing in interest, particularly to one who has "done" the conventionally overrun resorts of the Tyrol, Egypt or Norway; and the country here is far more accessible. Furthermore the comforts of modern travel, as regards palace hotels and sleeping-

cars, if less highly developed, are more to be remarked. One lives bountifully throughout the whole of the French slopes of the Pyrenees, from a table well supplied with many exotic articles of food such as truffles, and *salaisons* of all sorts, fresh mountain lake trout, and those delightful *crouchades* and *cassoulets,* which in the more populous centres are only occasional, expensive luxuries.

Both the valleys and the mountains are equally charming and characteristic. The lowlanders and the mountaineers are two different species of man, but they both join hands in the admiration of, and devotion to their beloved country.

The soft, sloping valleys and the plains below, in the great watersheds of the Garonne, the Aude, the Nive, or the Adour, tell one story, and the *terre debout,* as the French geographers call the mountains, quite another. The contrast and juxtaposition of these two topographical aspects, the varying manners and customs of the peoples, and the picturesque framing given to the châteaux and historic sites make an undeniably appealing ensemble which the writer thinks is not equalled elsewhere in travelled Europe.

One of the chief characteristics of the chain

of the Pyrenees is that it possesses numerous passages or passes at very considerable elevations, being outranked by surrounding peaks usually to the extent of a thousand metres only. These passes are not always practicable for wheeled traffic to be sure, but still they form a series of exits and entrances from and into Spain which are open to the dwellers in the high valleys of either country on foot or on donkey back. They are distinguished by various prefixes such as *puerto, collada, passo, hourque, hourquette, brèche, port, col,* and *passage,* but one and all answer more or less specifically to the name of a mountain pass.

The expression of "*il y a des Pyrénées,*" has been paraphrased in latter days as "*il n'y a plus de Pyrénées.*" A Spanish aeronaut has recently crossed the crest of the range in a balloon, from Pau to Grenada — seven hundred and thirty kilometres as the birds fly. This intrepid sportsman, in his balloon "El Cierzo," crossed the divide in the dead of night, at an elevation varying between two thousand three hundred and two thousand nine hundred metres, somewhere between the Pic d'Anie and the Pic du Midi d'Ossau. In these days when automobiles beat express trains,

and motor-boats beat steamships for speed, this crossing of the Pyrenees by balloon stands unique in the annals of sport.

The crossing of the Pyrenees has already resolved itself into a momentous economic question. Half a dozen roads fit for carriage traffic, and two gateways by which pass the railways of the east and west coasts, are the sole practicable means of communication between France and Spain.

The chain of the Pyrenees from west to east presents nearly a uniform height; its simplicity and uniformity is remarkable. It is a veritable wall.

To-day the Parisian journals are all printing scare-heads, reading, "*Plus de Pyrénées*" and announcing railway projects which will bring Paris and Madrid within twenty hours of each other, and Paris and Algiers within forty. New tunnels, or *ports,* to the extent of five in place of two, are to be opened, and if balloons or air-ships don't come to supersede railways there will be a net-work of iron rails throughout the upper valleys of the Pyrenees as there are in Switzerland.

The *ville d'eaux,* or watering-places, of the Pyrenees date from prehistoric times. At Ax-les-Thermes there has recently been dis-

covered a tank buried under three metres of alluvial soil, and dating from the bronze age.

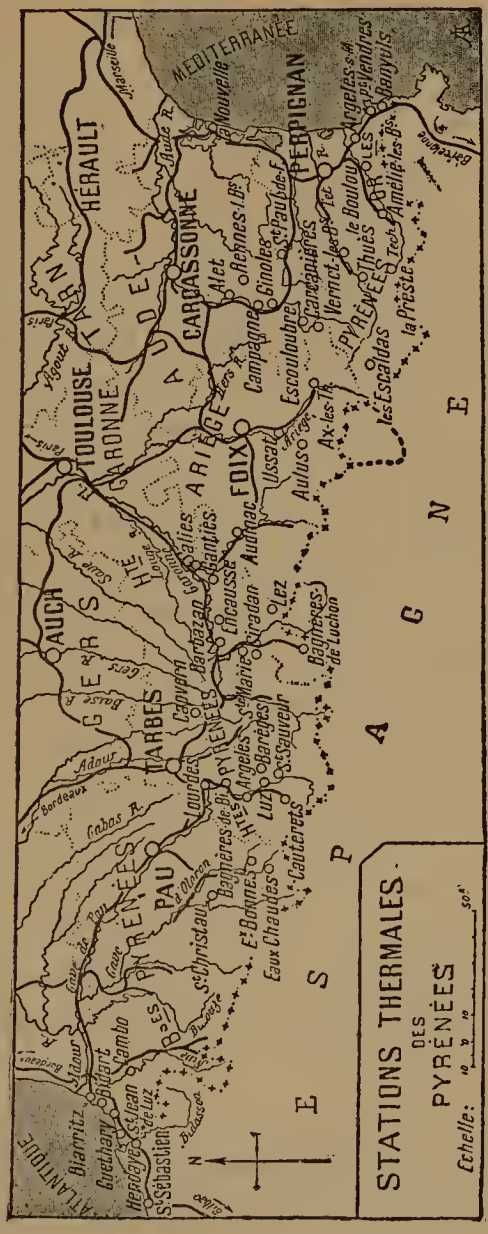
Old maps of these parts show that the baths and waters of the region were widely known in mediæval times. It was not, however, until the reign of Louis XV that the " stations " took on that popular development brought about by

The Five Proposed Railways

the sovereigns and their courts who frequented them.

Not all of these can be indicated or described here but the accompanying map indicates them and their locations plainly enough.

Nearly every malady, real or imaginary (and there have been many imaginary ones here, that have undergone a cure), can be


STATIONS THERMALES
DES
PYRÉNÉES
Echelle:
ESPAGNE
MEDITERRANEE
ATLANTIQUE
HÉRAULT
AUDE
PYRÉNÉES ORIENTALES
PERPIGNAN
CARCASSONNE
FOIX
ARIÉGE
TOULOUSE
HAUTE GARONNE
GERS
AUCH
HTES PYRÉNÉES
TARBES
PAU
BASSES PYRÉNÉES
Bayonne
Biarritz
St Sebastien
Hendaye
St Jean de Luz
Cambo
Eaux Bonnes
Eaux Chaudes
Cauterets
Luz
Barèges
Bagnères de Bigorre
Bagnères de Luchon
Capvern
Barbazan
Encausse
Audinac
Ussat
Ax-les-Th.
Escouloubre
Campagne
Rennes-les-B.
Alet
Limoux
Narbonne
Nouvelle
Marseille
Vernet-les-B.
Amélie-les-B.
Arles-s-M.
Banyuls
Cerbère
les Escaldas
la Preste
Thuès
Prades
Vinça
Ille
Toulouse
Bordeaux
Orthez
Dax
Adour
Gave de Pau
Gave d'Oloron
Gave de Pau
Gave de Cauterets
Gave de Luz
Gave de Bastan
Nive
Nivelle
Bidassoa
Gabas R.
Aude R.
Têt R.
Agly R.
Tech R.
Garonne R.
Ariège R.
Salat R.
Lez
Aulus
Seix
St Girons
St Marie
St Sauveur
St Christau
Oloron
Orthez
Dax
Pau
Lourdes
Tarbes
Auch
Foix
Carcassonne
Perpignan
Narbonne
Toulouse
Paris
Bordeaux
Marseille

benefited by the waters of the Pyrenees. Only a specialist could prescribe though.

In point of popularity as resorts the baths and springs of the Pyrenees rank about as follows: Eaux-Bonnes, Eaux-Chaudes, Cauterets, St. Sauveur, Barèges, Bagnères de Bigorre, Luchon, Salies de Béarn, Ussat, Ax-les-Thermes, Vernet and Amélie les Bains.

Whatever the efficacy of their waters may be, one and all may be classed as resorts where "all the attractions" — as the posters announce — of similar places elsewhere may be found, — great and expensive hotels, tea shops, theatres, golf, tennis and "the game." If the waters don't cure, one is sure to have been amused, if not edified. The watering-places of the Pyrenees may not possess establishments or bath houses as grand or notorious as those of Vichy, Aix, or Homburg, and their attendant amusements of sport and high stakes and cards may not be the chief reason they are patronized, but all the same they are very popular little resorts, with as charming settings and delightful surroundings as any known.

At Eaux-Bonnes there are four famous springs, and at Eaux-Chaudes are six of diverse temperatures, all of them exceedingly

efficacious "cures" for rheumatism. At Cambo — a new-found retreat for French painters and literary folk — are two *sources,* one sulphurous and the other ferruginous. Mostly the waters of Cambo are drunk; for bathing purposes they are always heated. Napoleon first set the pace at Cambo, but its fame was a long while becoming widespread. In 1808 the emperor proposed to erect a military hospital here, and one hundred and fifty thousand francs were actually appropriated for it, but the fall of the Empire ended that hope as it did many others. In the commune of Salies is a *source,* a *fontaine,* which gives a considerable supply of salt to be obtained through evaporation; also in the mountains neighbouring upon Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, and in the Arrondissement of Mauléon, are still other springs from which the extraction of salt is a profitable industry.

In the borders of the blue Gave de Pau, in full view of the extended horizon on one side and the lowland plain on the other, one appreciates the characteristics of the Pyrenees at their very best.

One recalls the gentle hills and vales of the Ile de France, the rude, granite slopes of Bretagne, the sublime peaks of the Savoian

Alps, and all the rest of the topographic tableau of "la belle France," but nothing seen before — nor to be seen later — excels the Pyrenees region for infinite variety. It is truly remarkable, from the grandeur of its sky-line to the winsomeness and softness of its valleys, peopled everywhere (always excepting the alien importations of the resorts) with a reminiscent civilization of the past, with little or no care for the super-refinements of more populous and progressve regions. The Pyrenees, as a whole, are still unspoiled for the serious-minded traveller. This is more than can be said of the Swiss Alps, the French Riviera, the German Rhine, or the byways of merry England.

CHAPTER IV

THE PYRENEES — THEIR HISTORY AND PEOPLES

It may be a question as to who discovered the Pyrenees, but Louis XIV was the first exploiter thereof — writing in a literal sense — when he made the famous remark "*Il y a des Pyrénées.*" Before that, and to a certain extent even to-day, they may well be called the "*Pyrénées inconnues,*" a *terra incognita,* as the old maps marked the great desert wastes of mid-Africa. The population of the entire region known as the Pyrénées Françaises is as varied as any conglomerate population to be found elsewhere in France in an area of something less than six hundred kilometres.

The Pyrenees were ever a frontier battle-ground. At the commencement of the eleventh century things began to shape themselves north of the mountain chain, and modern France, through the *féodalité,* began to grow into a well-defined entity.

Charles Martel it was, as much as any other, who made all this possible, and indeed he began

it when he broke the Saracen power which had over-run all Spain and penetrated via the Pyrenean gateways into Gaul.

The Iberians who flooded southern Gaul, and even went so far afield as Ireland, came from the southwestern peninsula through the passes of the Pyrenees. They were of a southern race, in marked distinction to the Franks and Gauls. Settling south of the Garonne they became known in succeeding generations as Aquitains and spoke a local *patois,* different even from that of the Basques whom they somewhat resembled. The Vascons, or Gascons, were descendants of this same race, though perhaps developed through a mixture of other races.

Amidst the succession of diverse dominations, one race alone came through the mill whole, unscathed and independent. These were the Basques who occupied that region best defined to-day as lying around either side of the extreme western frontier of France and Spain.

A French savant's opinion of the status of this unique province and its people tells the story better than any improvisation that can be made. A certain M. Garat wrote in the mid-nineteenth century as follows: —

"Well sheltered in the gorges of the Pyre-

The Basques of the Mountains

nees, where the Gauls, the Francs and the Saracens had never attacked their liberties, the Basques have escaped any profound judgments of that race of historians and philosophers which have dissected most of the other peoples of Europe. Rome even dared not attempt to throttle the Basques and merge them into her absorbing civilization. All around them their neighbours have changed twenty times their speech, their customs and their laws, but the Basques still show their original characters and physiognomies, scarcely dimmed by the progress of the ages."

Certainly they are as proud and noble a race as one remarks in a round of European travel.

A Basque will always tell you if you ask him as to whether he is French or Spanish: "*Je ne suis pas Français, je suis Basque; je ne suis Espagnol, je suis Basque; ou, — tout simplement, je suis homme.*"

This is as one would expect to find it, but it is possible to come across an alien even in the country of the Basque. On interrogating a smiling peasant driving a yoke of cream-coloured oxen, he replied: "*Mais je ne suis pas Basque; je suis Périgourdin* — born at Bade-

fols, just by the old château of Bertrand de Born the troubadour."

One may be pardoned for a reference to the *cagots* of the Basque country, a despised race of people not unlike the cretins of the Alps. As Littré defines them they are distinctly a "people of the Pyrenees." The race, as a numerous body, practically is extinct to-day. They lived in poor, mean cabins, far from the towns and under the protection of a seigneurial château or abbey. All intercourse with their neighbours was forbidden, and at church they occupied a space apart, had a special holy water font, and when served with blessed bread it was thrown at them as if they were dogs, and not offered graciously.

This may have been uncharitable and unchristianlike, but the placing of separate holy water-basins in the churches was simply carrying out the principle of no intercourse between the Basques and the *cagots,* not even between those who had become, or professed to be Christians. "The loyal hand of a Basque should touch nothing that had previously been touched by a *cagot.*"

From the Basque country, through the heart of the Pyrenees, circling Béarn, Navarre and

Foix, to Roussillon is a far cry, and a vast change in speech and manners.

Life in a Pyrenean village for a round of the seasons would probably cure most of the ills that flesh is heir to. It may be doubtful as to who was the real inventor of the simple life — unless it was Adam — but Jean Jacques Rousseau was astonished that people did not live more in the open air as a remedy against the too liberal taking of medicine.

"*Gouter la liberté sur la montagne immense!*" This was the dream of the poet, but it may become the reality of any who choose to try it. One remarks a certain indifference among the mountaineers of the Pyrenees for the conventions of life.

The mountaineer of the Pyrenees would rather ride a donkey than a pure bred Arab or drive an automobile. He has no use for the proverb: —

"Honourable is the riding of a horse to the rider,
But the mule is a dishonour and a donkey a disgrace."

When one recalls the fact that there are comparatively few of the bovine race in the south of France, more particularly in Languedoc and Provence, he understands why it is that one finds the *cuisine à l'huile d'olive*

— and sometimes *huile d'arachide,* which is made from peanuts, and not bad at that, at least not unhealthful.

In the Pyrenees proper, where the pasturage is rich, cattle are more numerous, and nowhere, not even in the Allier or Poitou in mid-France, will one find finer cows or oxen. Little, sure-footed donkeys, with white-gray muzzles and crosses down their backs, and great cream-coloured oxen seem to do all the work that elsewhere is done by horses. There are ponies, too, — short-haired, tiny beasts, — in the Pyrenees, and in the summer months one sees a Basque or a Béarnais horse-dealer driving his live stock (ponies only) on the hoof all over France, and making sales by the way.

The Mediterranean terminus of the Pyrenees has quite different characteristics from that of the west. Here the mountains end in a great promontory which plunges precipitately into the Mediterranean between the Spanish province of Figueras and the rich garden-spot of Roussillon, in France.

French and Spanish manners, customs and speech are here much intermingled. On one side of the frontier they are very like those on the other; only the uniforms of the officialdom made up of *douaniers, carabineros, gen-*

In a Pyrenean Hermitage

darmes and soldiers differ. The type of face and figure is the same; the usual speech is the same; and dress varies but little, if at all. "*Voilà! la fraternité Franco-Espagnole.*

One ever-present reminder of two alien peoples throughout all Roussillon is the presence of the *châteaux-forts,* the walled towns, the watch-towers, and defences of this mountain frontier.

The chief characteristics of Roussillon, from the seacoast plain up the mountain valleys to the passes, are the château ruins, towers and moss-grown hermitages, all relics of a day of vigorous, able workmen, who built, if not for eternity, at least for centuries. In the Pyrénées-Orientales alone there are reckoned thirty-five abandoned hermitages, any one of which will awaken memories in the mind of a romantic novelist which will supply him with more background material than he can use up in a dozen mediæval romances. And if he takes one or more of these hallowed spots of the Pyrenees for a setting he will have something quite as worthy as the overdone Italian hilltop hermitage, and a good deal fresher in a colour sense.

The strategic Pyrenean frontier, nearly six hundred kilometres, following the various

twistings and turnings, has not varied in any particular since the treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659. From Cap Cerbère on the Mediterranean it runs, via the crests of the Monts Albères, up to Perthus, and then by the crests of the Pyrénées-Orientales, properly called, up to Puigmal; and traversing the Sègre, crosses the Col de la Perche and passes the Pic Nègre, separating France from the Val d'Andorre, crosses the Garonne to attain the peaks of the Pyrénées-Occidentales, and so, via the Forêt d'Iraty, and through the Pays Basque, finally comes to the banks of the Bidassoa, between Hendaye and Irun-Feuntarrabia.

The Treaty of Verdun gave the territory of France as extending up to the Pyrenees *and beyond* (to include the Comté de Barcelone), but this limit in time was rearranged to stop at the mountain barrier. The graft didn't work! Roussillon remained for long in the possession of the house of Aragon, and its people were, in the main, closely related with the Catalans over the border, but the Treaty of the Pyrenees, in 1659, definitely acquired this fine wine-growing province for the French.

The frontier of the Pyrenees is much better defended by natural means than that of the Alps. For four hundred kilometres of its

length — quite two-thirds of its entirety — the passages and breaches are inaccessible to an army, or even to a carriage.

From the times of Hannibal and Charlemagne up to the wars of the Empire only the extremities have been crossed for the invasion of alien territory. It is in these situations that one finds the frontier fortresses of to-day; at Figueras and Gerone in Spain; in France at Bellegarde (Col de Perthus), Prats-de-Mollo, Mont Louis, Villefranche and Perpignan, in the east; and at Portalet, Navarrino, Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port (guarding the Col de Ronçevaux) and Bayonne in the west. Bayonne and Perpignan guard the only easily practicable routes (Paris-Madrid and Paris-Barcelona).

Hannibal and Charlemagne are the two great names of early history identified with the Pyrenees. Hannibal exploited more than one popular scenic touring ground of to-day, and for a man who is judged only by his deeds — not by his personality, for no authentic portrait of him exists, even in words — he certainly was endowed with a profound foresight. Charlemagne, warrior, lawgiver and patron of letters, predominant figure of a gloomy age, met the greatest defeat of his career in the

Pyrenees, at Roncevaux, when he advanced on Spain in 778.

Close by the Cap Cerbère, where French and Spanish territory join, is the little town and pass of Banyuls. This Col de Banyuls was, in 1793, the witness of a supreme act of patriotism. The Spaniards were biding their time to invade France via Roussillon, and made overtures to the people of the little village of Banyuls — famous to-day for its *vins de liqueur* and not much else, but at that time numbering less than a thousand souls — to join them and make the road easy. The *procureur du roi* replied simply: "*Les habitants de Banyuls étant français devaient tous mourir pour l'honneur et l'indépendance de la France.*"

Three thousand Spaniards thereupon attacked the entire forces of the little commune — men, women and children — but finding their efforts futile were forced to retire. This ended the "Battle of Banyuls," one of the "little wars" that historians have usually neglected, or overlooked, in favour of something more spectacular.

On the old "Route Royale" from Paris to Barcelona, via Perpignan, are two chefs-d'œuvre of the mediæval bridge-builder, made

before the days of steel rails and wire ropes and all their attendant ugliness. These are the Pont de Perpignan over the Basse, and the Pont de Céret on the Tech, each of them spanning the stream by one single, graceful arch. The latter dates from 1336, and it is doubtful if the modern stone-mason could do his work as well as he who was responsible for this architectural treasure.

One finds a bit of superstitious ignorance once and again, even in enlightened France of to-day. It was not far from here, on the road to the Col de Banyuls, that we were asked by a peasant from what country we came. He was told by way of a joke that we were Chinese. "*Est-ce loin?*" he asked. "*Deux cents lieues!*" "*Diable! c'est une bonne distance!*" One suspects that he knew more than he was given credit for, and perhaps it was he that was doing the joking, for he said by way of parting: "*Ma foi, c'est bien triste d'être si loin de votre mère.*"

What a little land of contrasts the region of the Pyrenees is! It is all things to all men. From the low-lying valleys and sea-coast plains, as one ascends into the upper regions, it is as if one went at once into another country. Certainly no greater contrast is marked

in all France than that between the Hautes-Pyrénées and the Landes for instance.

The Hautes-Pyrénées of to-day was formerly made up of Bigorre, Armagnac and the extreme southerly portion of Gascogne. Cæsar called the people Tarbelli, Bigerriones and Flussates, and Visigoths, Franks and Gascons prevailed over their destinies in turn.

In the early feudal epoch Bigorre, "the country of the four valleys," had its own counts, but was united with Béarn in 1252, becoming a part of the patrimony which Henri Quatre brought ultimately to the crown of France.

Antiquities before the middle ages are rare in these parts, in spite of the memories remaining from Roman times. Perhaps the greatest of these are the baths and springs at Cauterets, one of them being known as the Bains des Espagnoles and the other as the Bains de Cesar. These unquestionably were developed in Roman times.

The chief architectural glory of the region is the ancient city of St. Bertrand, the capital of Comminges, the ancient *Lugdunum Convenarum* of Strabon and Pliny. Its fortifications and its remarkable cathedral place it in

A Mountaineer of the Pyrenees

the ranks with Carcassonne, Aigues-Mortes and Béziers.

The manners and customs of the Bigordans of the towns (not to be confounded with the Bigoudens of Brittany) have succumbed somewhat to the importation of outside ideas by the masses who throng their baths and springs, but nevertheless their main characteristics stand out plainly.

Quite different from the Béarnais are the Bigordans, and, somewhat uncharitably, the latter have a proverb which given in their own tongue is as follows:—"*Béarnès faus et courtès.*" Neighbourly jealousy accounts for this. The Béarnais are morose, steady and commercial, the Bigordans lively, bright and active, and their sociability is famed afar.

In the open country throughout the Pyrenees, there are three classes of inhabitants, those of the mountains and high valleys, those of the slopes, and those of the plains. The first are hard-working and active, but often ignorant and superstitious; the second are more gay, less frugal and better livers than the mountaineers; and those of the plains are often downright lazy and indolent. The mendicant race, of which old writers told, has apparently disappeared. There are practi-

cally no beggars in France except gypsies, and there is no mistaking a gypsy for any other species.

In general one can say that the inhabitants of the high Pyrenees are a simple, good and generous people, and far less given to excess than many others of the heterogeneous mass which make up the population of modern France.

Simple and commodious and made of the wool of the country are the general characteristics of the costumes of these parts, as indeed they are of most mountain regions. But the distinctive feature, with the men as with the women, is the topknot coiffure. In the plains, the men wear the pancake-like *béret,* and in the high valleys a sort of a woollen bonnet — something like a Phrygian cap. With the women it is a sort of a hood of red woollen stuff, black-bordered and exceedingly picturesque. *"C'est un joli cadre pour le visage d'une jolie femme,"* said a fat commercial traveller, with an eye for pretty women, whom the writer met at a Tarbes table d'hôte.

A writer of another century, presumably untravelled, in describing the folk of the Pyrenees remarked: "The Highlanders of the Pyrenees put one in mind of Scotland; they

have round, flat caps and loose breeches." Never mind the breeches, but the *béret* of the Basque is no more like the tam-o'-shanter of the Scot than is an anchovy like a herring.

An English traveller once remarked on the peculiar manner of transport in these parts in emphatic fashion. "With more sense than John Bull, the Pyrenean carter knows how to build and load his wagon to the best advantage," he said. He referred to the great carts for transporting wine casks and barrels, built with the hind wheels much higher than the front ones. It's a simple mechanical exposition of the principle that a wagon so built goes up-hill much easier.

Here in the Hautes-Pyrénées they speak the speech of Languedoc, with variations, idioms and bizarre interpolations, which may be Spanish, but sound like Arabic. At any rate it's a beautiful, lisping *patois,* not at all like the speech of Paris, "twanged through the nose," as the men of the Midi said of it when they went up to the capital in Revolutionary times "to help capture the king's castle."

The great literary light of the region was Despourrins, a poet of the eighteenth century, whose verses have found a permanent place in French literature, and whose rhymes were

chanted as were those of the troubadours of centuries before.

To just how great an extent the *patois* differs from the French tongue the following verse of Despourrins will show: —

"Aci, debat aqueste peyre,
Repaüse lou plus gran de touts lou médecis,
Qui de poü d'està chens besis,
En a remplit lou cimetyre.

"Ici, sous cette pierre,
Repose le plus graud de tous les médicins,
Qui de peur d'être sans voisins
En a rempli le cimetière."

A humourist also was this great poet!

Throughout the Pyrenean provinces, and along the shores of the Mediterranean, from Catalonia to the Bouches-du-Rhône are found the Gitanos, or the French Gypsies, who do not differ greatly from others of their tribe wherever found. This perhaps is accounted for by the fact that the shrines of their patron saint — Sara, the servant of the "Three Maries" exiled from Judea, and who settled at Les Saintes Maries-de-la-Mer — was located near the mouth of the Rhône. This same shrine is a place of pilgrimage for the gypsies of all the world, and on the twenty-fourth of

May one may see sights here such as can be equalled nowhere else. Not many travellers' itineraries have ever included a visit to this humble and lonesome little fishing village of the Bouches-du-Rhône, judging from the infrequency with which one meets written accounts.

Gypsy bands are numerous all through the Départements of the south of France, especially in Hérault and the Pyrénées-Orientales. Like most of their kind they are usually horse-traders, and perhaps horse-stealers, for their ideas of honesty and probity are not those of other men. They sometimes practise as sort of quack horse-doctors and horse and dog clippers, etc., and the women either make baskets, or, more frequently, simply beg, or "*tire les cartes*" and tell fortunes. They sing and dance and do many other things honest and dishonest to make a livelihood. Their world's belongings are few and their wants are not great. For the most part their possessions consist only of their personal belongings, a horse, a donkey or a mule, their caravan, or *roulotte,* and a gold or silver chain or two, earrings in their ears, and a knife — of course a knife, for the vagabond gypsy doesn't fight with fire-arms.

The further one goes into the French valleys

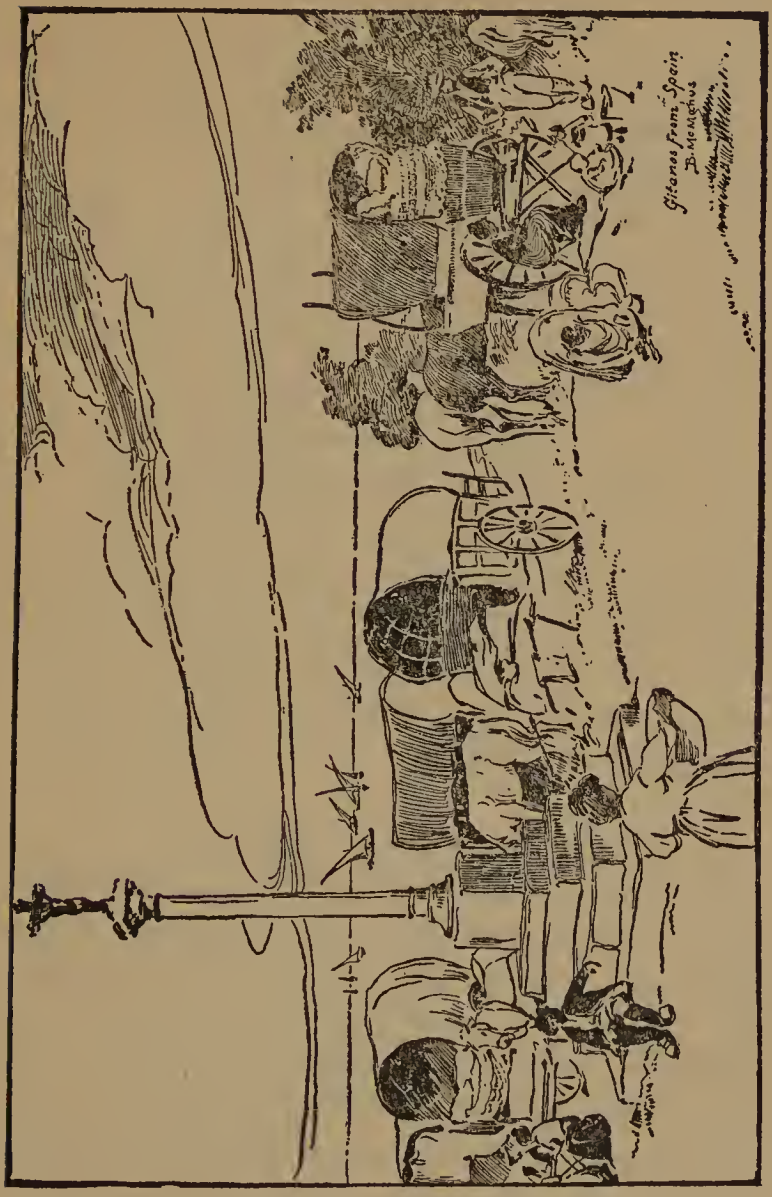
of the Pyrenees the more one sees the real Gitanos of Spain, or at least of Spanish ancestry. Like all gypsy folk, they have no fixed abode, but roam and roam and roam, though never far away from their accustomed haunts. They multiply, but are seldom cross-bred out of their race.

It's an idyllic life that the Gitano and the Romany-Chiel leads, or at least the poet would have us think so.

"Upon the road to Romany
It's stay, friend, stay!
There's lots o' love and lots o' time
To linger on the way;
Poppies for the twilight,
Roses for the noon,
It's happy goes as lucky goes
To Romany in June."

But as the Frenchman puts it, "look to the other side of the coin."

Brigandage is the original profession of the gypsy, though to-day the only stealing which they do is done stealthily, and not in the plain hold-up fashion. They profess a profound regard for the Catholic religion, but they practise other rites in secret, and form what one versed in French Catholicism would call a "*culte particulière.*" It is known that they baptize their



Gitanos from Spain

newly-born children *as often as possible* — of course each time in a different place — in order that they may solicit alms in each case. Downright begging is forbidden in France, but for such a purpose the law is lenient.

They are gross feeders, the Gitanos, and a fowl "a little high" has no terrors for them; they have even been known to eat sea-gulls, which no white man has ever had the temerity to taste. It has been said that they will eat cats and dogs and even rats, but this is doubtless another version of the Chinese fable. At any rate a mere heating of their viands in a saucepan — not by any stretch of the imagination can it be called cooking — is enough for them, and what their dishes lack in cooking is made up by liberal additions of salt, pepper, *piment* (which is tobacco or something like it), and saffron.

As to type, the French Gitanos are of that olive-brown complexion, with the glossy black hair, usually associated with the stage gypsy, rather small in stature, but well set up, strong and robust, fine eyes and features and, with respect to the young women and girls (who marry young), often of an astonishing beauty. In the course of a very few years the beauty of the women pales considerably, owing, no

doubt, to their hard life, but among the men their fine physique and lively emotional features endure until well past the half-century.

The gypsies are supposedly a joyful, amiable race; sometimes they are and sometimes they are not; but looking at them all round it is not difficult to apply the verses of Béranger, beginning:

> "Sorciers, bateleurs ou filous
> Reste immonde
> D'un ancien monde
> Gais Bohémiens, d'où venez-vous."

One other class of residents in the Pyrenees must be mentioned here, and that is the family of Ursus and their descendants.

The bears of the Pyrenees are of two sorts; the dignified *Ours des Pyrénées* is a versatile and accomplished creature. Sometimes he is a carnivorous beast, and sometimes he is a vegetarian pure and simple — one of the kind which will not even eat eggs. The latter species is more mischievous than his terrible brother, for he forages stealthily in the night and eats wheat, buckwheat, maize, and any other breakfast-food, prepared or semi-prepared, he finds handy.

The carnivorous breed wage war against cat-

tle and sheep, or did when they were more numerous, so that all live stock were obliged to be enclosed at night. Curiously enough, both species are fattest in winter, when conditions of life are supposed to be the hardest. There are wolves, too, in the Pyrenees, but they are not frequently met with. A bear will not attack a wolf, but a number of wolves together will attack a bear.

CHAPTER V.

ROUSSILLON AND THE CATALANS

Roussillon is a curious province. "Roussillon is a bow with two strings," say the inhabitants. The workers in the vineyards of other days are becoming fishermen, and the fishermen are becoming vineyard workers. The arts of Neptune and the wiles of Bacchus have however conspired to give a prosperity to Roussillon which many more celebrated provinces lack.

The Roussillon of other days, a feudal power

in its time, with its counts and nobles, has become but a Département of latter-day France. The first historical epochs of Roussillon are but obscurely outlined, but they began when Hannibal freed the Pyrenees in 536, and in time the Romans became masters here, as elsewhere in Gaul.

Then there came three hundred years of Visigoth rule, which brought the Saracens, and, in 760, Pepin claimed Roussillon for France. Then began the domination of the counts. First they were but delegates of the king, but in time they usurped royal authority and became rulers in their own right.

Roussillon had its own particular counts, but in a way they bowed down to the king of Aragon, though indeed the kings of France up to Louis IX considered themselves suzerains. By the Treaty of Corbeil Louis IX renounced this fief in 1258 to his brother king of Aragon. At the death of James I of Aragon his states were divided among his children, and Roussillon came to the kings of Majorca. Wars within and without now caused an era of bloodshed. Jean II, attacked by the men of Navarre and of Catalonia, demanded aid of Louis XI, who sent seven hundred lances and men, and three hundred thousand gold crown pieces, which

latter the men of Roussillon were obliged to repay when the war was over. Jean II, Comte de Roussillon, hedged and demanded delay, and in due course was obliged to pawn his countship as security. This the Roussillonnais resented and revolt followed, when Louis XI without more ado went up against Perpignan and besieged it on two occasions before he could collect the sum total of his bill.

Charles VIII, returning from his Italian travels, in a generous frame of mind, gave back the province to the king of Aragon without demanding anything in return. Ferdinand of Aragon became in time king of Spain, by his marriage with Isabella, and Roussillon came again directly under Spanish domination.

Meantime the geographical position of Roussillon was such that it must either become a part of France or a buffer-state, or duelling ground, where both races might fight out their quarrels. Neither François I nor Louis XIII thought of anything but to acquire the province for France, and so it became a battle-ground where a continuous campaign went on for years, until, in fact, the Grand Condé, after many engagements, finally entered Perpignan and brought about the famous Treaty of the Pyrenees, signed on the Ile des Faisans at the

other extremity of the great frontier mountain chain.

The antique monuments of Roussillon are not many; principally they are the Roman baths at Arles-sur-Tech, the tomb of Constant, son of Constantine, at Elne, and an old Mohammedan or Moorish mosque, afterwards serving as a Christian church, at Planes. The ancient city of Ruscino, the chief Roman settlement, has practically disappeared, a tower, called the Tor de Castel-Rossello, only remaining.

Impetuosity of manner, freedom in their social relations, and a certain egotism have ever been the distinctive traits of the Roussillonnais. It was so in the olden times, and the traveller of to-day will have no difficulty in finding the same qualities. Pierre de Marca first discovered, and wrote of these traits in 1655, and his observations still hold good.

Long contact with Spain and Catalonia has naturally left its impress on Roussillon, both with respect to men and manners. The Spanish tone is disappearing in the towns, but in the open country it is as marked as ever. There one finds bull-fights, cock-fights, and wild, abandoned dancing, not to say guitar twanging, and incessant cigarette rolling and smoking,

Catalans of Roussillon

and all sorts of moral contradictions — albeit there is no very immoral sentiment or motive. These things are observed alike of the Roussillonnais and the Catalonians, just over the border.

The bull-fight is the chief joy and pride of the people. The labourer will leave his fields, the merchant his shop, and the craftsman his atelier to make one of an audience in the arena. Not in Spain itself, at Barcelona, Bilboa, Seville or Madrid is a bull-fight throng more critical or insistent than at Perpignan.

He loves immensely well to dance, too, the Roussillonnais, and he often carries it to excess. It is his national amusement, as is that of the Italian the singing of serenades beneath your window. On all great gala occasions throughout Roussillon a place is set apart for dancing, usually on the bare or paved ground in the open air, not only in the country villages but in the towns and cities as well.

The dances are most original. Ordinarily the men will dance by themselves, a species of muscular activity which they call "*lo batl.*" A *contrepas* finally brings in a mixture of women, the whole forming a mélange of all the gyrations of a dervish, the swirls of the Spanish

dancing girl and the quicksteps of a Virginia reel.

The music of these dances is equally bizarre. A flute called *lo flaviol,* a *tamborin,* a *hautboy, prima* and *tenor,* and a *cornemeuse,* or *borrassa,* usually compose the orchestra, and the music is more agreeable than might be supposed.

In Roussillon the religious fêtes and ceremonies are conducted in much the flowery, ostentatious manner that they are in Spain, and not at all after the manner of the simple, devout fêtes and *pardons* of Bretagne. The Fête de Jeudi-Saint, and the Fête-Dieu in Roussillon are gorgeous indeed; sanctuaries become as theatres and tapers and incense and gay vestments and chants make the pageants as much pagan as they are Christian.

The coiffure of the women of Roussillon is a handkerchief hanging as a veil on the back of the head, and fastened by the ends beneath the chin, with a knot of black ribbon at each temple.

Their waist line is tightly drawn, and their bodice is usually laced down the front like those of the German or Tyrolean peasant maid. A short skirt, in ample and multifarious pleats, and coloured stockings finish off a costume as

The Women of Roussillon

unlike anything else seen in France as it is *like* those of Catalonia in Spain.

The great Spanish cloak, or *capuchon,* is also an indispensable article of dress for the men as well as for the women.

The men wear a tall, red, liberty-cap sort of a bonnet, its top-knot hanging down to the shoulder — always to the left. A short vest and wide bodied pantaloons, joined together with yards of red sash, wound many times tightly around the waist, complete the men's costume, all except their shoes, which are of a special variety known as *spardilles,* or *espadrilles,* another Spanish affectation.

The speech of Roussillon used to be Catalan, and now of course it is French; but in the country the older generations are apt to know much Catalan-Spanish and little French.

Just what variety of speech the Catalan tongue was has ever been a discussion with the word makers. It was not Spanish exactly as known to-day, and has been called *roman vulgaire, rustique,* and *provincial,* and many of its words and phrases are supposed to have come down from the barbarians or the Arabs.

In 1371 the Catalan tongue already had a poetic art, a dictionary of rhymes, and a grammar, and many inscriptions on ancient monu-

ments in these parts (eighth, ninth and tenth centuries) were in that tongue. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Catalan tongue possessed a written civil and maritime law, thus showing it was no bastard.

A fatality pursued everything Catalan however; its speech became Spanish, and its nationality was swallowed up in that of Castille. At any rate, as the saying goes in Roussillon, — and no one will dispute it, — " one must be a Catalan to understand Catalan."

The Pays-de-Fenouillet, of which St. Paul was the former capital, lies in the valley of the Agly. Saint-Paul-de-Fenouillet is the present commercial capital of the region, if the title of commercial capital can be appropriately bestowed upon a small town of two thousand inhabitants. The old province, however, was swallowed up by Roussillon, which in turn has become the Département of the Pyrénées-Orientales.

The feudality of these parts centred around the Château de Fenouillet, now a miserable ruin on the road to Carcassonne, a few kilometres distant. There are some ruined, but still traceable, city walls at Saint-Paul-de-Fenouillet, but nothing else to suggest its one-time importance, save its fourteenth-century church,

and the great tower of its ancient chapter-house.

Nearer Perpignan is Latour-de-France, the frontier town before Richelieu was able to annex Roussillon to his master's crown.

Latour-de-France also has the débris of a château to suggest its former greatness, but its small population of perhaps twelve hundred persons think only of the culture of the vine and the olive and have little fancy for historical monuments.

Here, and at Estagel, on the Perpignan road, the Catalan tongue is still to be heard in all its silvery picturesqueness.

Estagel is what the French call "*une jolie petite ville;*" it has that wonderful background of the Pyrenees, a frame of olive-orchards and vineyards, two thousand inhabitants, the Hotel Gary, a most excellent, though unpretentious, little hotel, and the birthplace of François Arago as its chief sight. Besides this, it has a fine old city gate and a great clock-tower which is a reminder of the Belfry of Bruges. The wines of the neighbourhood, the *macabeu* and the *malvoisie* are famous.

North of Estagel, manners and customs and the *patois* change. Everything becomes Languedocian. In France the creation of the mod-

ern departments, replacing the ancient provinces, has not levelled or changed ethnological distinctions in the least.

The low-lying, but rude, crests of the Corbières cut out the view northward from the valley of the Agly. The whole region roundabout is strewn with memories of feudal times, a château here, a tower there, but nothing of great note. The Château de Queribus, or all that is left of it, a great octagonal thirteenth-century donjon, still guards the route toward Limoux and Carcassonne, at a height of nearly seven hundred metres. In the old days this route formed a way in and out of Roussillon, but now it has grown into disuse.

Cucugnan is only found on the maps of the Etat-Major, in the Post-Office Guide, and in Daudet's "Lettres de Mon Moulin." We ourselves merely recognized it as a familiar name. The "Curé de Cucugnan" was one of Daudet's heroes, and belonged to these parts. The Provençal literary folks have claimed him to be of Avignon; though it is hard to see why when Daudet specifically wrote C-u-c-u-g-n-a-n. Nevertheless, even if they did object to Daudet's slander of Tarascon, the Provençaux are willing enough to appropriate all he did as belonging to them.

The Catalan water, or wine, bottle, called the *porro,* is everywhere in evidence in Roussillon. Perhaps it is a Mediterranean specialty, for the Sicilians and the Maltese use the same thing. It's a curious affair, something like an alchemist's alembic, and you drink from its nozzle, holding it above the level of your mouth and letting the wine trickle down your throat in as ample a stream as pleases your fancy.

Those who have become accustomed to it, will drink their wine no other way, claiming it is never so sweet as when drunk from the *porro.*

" Du miel délayé dans un rayon de soleil."

. . . . . .

" Boire la vie et la santé quand on le boit c'est le vin idéal."

Apparently every Catalan peasant's household has one of these curious glass bottles with its long tapering spout, and when a Catalan drinks from it, pouring a stream of wine directly into his mouth, he makes a " study " and a " picture " at the same time.

A variation of the same thing is the gourd or leathern bottle of the mountaineer. It is difficult to carry a glass bottle such as the *porro* around on donkey back, and so the thing is made of leather. The neck of this is of wood,

and a stopper pierced with a fine hole screws into it.

It comes in all sizes, holding from a bottleful to ten litres. The most common is a two-litre one. When you want to drink you hold the leather bag high in the air and pour a thin stream of wine into your mouth. The art is to stop neatly with a jerk, and not spill a drop. One *can* acquire the art, and it will be found an exceedingly practical way to carry drink.

It is a curious, little-known corner of Europe, where France and Spain join, at the eastern extremity of the Pyrenees, at Cap Cerbère. One read in classic legend will find some resemblance between Cap Cerbère and the terrible beast with three heads who guarded the gates of hell. There may be some justification for this, as Pomponius Mela, a Latin geographer, born however in Andalusia, wrote of a *Cervaria locus,* which he designated as the *finis Galliæ.* Then, through evolution, we have *Cervaria,* which in turn becomes the Catalan village of *Cerveia.* This is the attitude of the historians. The etymologists put it in this wise: *Cervaria* — meaning a wooded valley peopled with *cerfs* (stags). The reader may take his choice.

At any rate the Catalan Cerbère, known to-

day only as the frontier French station on the line to Barcelona, has become an unlovely railway junction, of little appeal except in the story of its past.

In the twelfth century the place had already attained to prominence, and its feudal seigneur, named Rabedos, built a public edifice for civic pride, and a church which he dedicated to San Salvador.

In 1361 Guillem de Pau, a noble of the rank of *donzell,* and a member of a family famous for its exploits against the Moors, became Seigneur de Cerbère, and the one act of his life which puts him on record as a feudal lord of parts is a charter signed by him giving the fishing rights offshore from Collioure, for the distance of ten leagues, to one Pierre Huguet — for a price. Thus is recorded a very early instance of official sinning. One certainly cannot sell that which he has not got; even maritime tribunals of to-day don't recognize anything beyond the "three mile limit."

The seigneurs of Pau, who were Baillis de Cerbère, came thus to have a hand in the conduct of affairs in the Mediterranean, though their own bailiwick was nearer the Atlantic coast. At this time there were nine vassal

chiefs of families who owed allegiance to the head. After the fourteenth century this frontier territory belonged, for a time, to the Seigneurs des Abelles, their name coming from another little feudal estate half hidden in one of the Mediterranean valleys of the Pyrenees.

The chapel of Cerbère, founded by Rabedos in the twelfth century, had fallen in ruins by the end of the fourteenth century, but many pious legacies left to it were conceded to the *clercs bénéficiaires,* a body of men in holy orders who had influence enough in the courts of justice to be able to claim as their own certain "goods of the church." Louis XIV cut short these clerical benefits, however, and gave them — by what right is quite vague — to his *maréchal,* Joseph de Rocabruna.

Some two centuries ago Cerbère possessed something approaching the dignity of a château-fortress.

An act of the 25th May, 1700, refers to the Château de Caroig, perhaps the Quer-Roig. The name now applies, however, only to a mass of ruins on the summit of a near-by mountain of the same name. Not every one in the neighbourhood admits this, some preferring to believe that the same heap of stones was once

a signal tower by which a warning fire was built to tell of the approach of the Saracens or the pirates of Barbary. It might well have been both watch-tower and château.

CHAPTER VI

FROM PERPIGNAN TO THE SPANISH FRONTIER

Once Perpignan was a fortified town of the first class, but now, save for its old Citadelle and the Castillet, its warlike aspect has disappeared.

One of Guy de Maupassant's heroes, having been asked his impressions of Algiers, replied, "*Alger est une ville blanche!*" If it had been Perpignan of which he was speaking, he would have said: "*Perpignan est une ville rouge!*"

for red is the dominant colour note of the entire city, from the red brick Castillet to the sidewalks in front of the cafés. Colour, however, is not the only thing that astonishes one at Perpignan; the *tramontane,* that cruel northwest wind, as cruel almost as the " mistral " of Provence, blows at times so fiercely that one wonders that one brick upon another stands in place on the grand old Castillet tower.

The brick fortifications of Perpignan are, or were, wonderful constructions, following, in form and system, the ancient Roman manner.

It was a sacrilege to strip from the lovely city of Perpignan its triple ramparts and Citadelle, leaving only the bare walls of the Castillet, the sole remainder of its strength of old.

Perpignan's walls have disappeared, but still one realizes full well what an important strategic point it is, guarding, as it does, the eastern gateway into Spain.

All the cities of the Midi possess some characteristic by which they are best known. Toulouse has its *Capitole,* Nîmes its *Arena,* Arles its Alyscamps, Pau its Château, and Perpignan its Castillet.

Built entirely of rosy-red brick, its battlemented walls rise beside the Quai de la Basse to-day as proudly as they ever did, though

shorn of their supporting ramparts, save the Porte Notre Dame adjoining. That fortunately has been spared. Above this Porte Notre Dame is a figure of the Madonna, which, as well as the gate, dates from the period when the kings of Aragon retook possession of the ephemeral Royaume de Majorque, of which Perpignan was the capital, — a glory, by the way, which endured less than seventy years, but which has left a noticeable trace in all things relating to the history of the region.

In the tenth century Perpignan was known only as "Villa Perpiniani," indeed it so remained until it was conquered by Louis XIII, when it became definitely French. Bloody war, celebrated sieges, ravages by the pest, an earthquake or two, and incendiaries without number could not raze the city which in time became one of the great frontier strongholds of France.

The Place de la Loge, the great café centre of Perpignan, is unique among the smaller cities of France. Here is animation at all hours of the day — and night, a perpetual going and coming of all the world, a veritable Rialto or a Rue de la Paix. It is the business centre of the city, and also the centre of its pleasures, a veritable forum. Cafés are all about; even

Porte Notre Dame and the Castillet, Perpignan

the grand old *Loge de Mer,* a delicious construction of the fourteenth century, is a café.

What a charming structure this Loge is! Its fourteenth-century constructive elements have been further beautified with late flowering Gothic of a century and a half later, and its great bronze lamps suggest a symbolism which stands for eternity, or at any rate bespeaks the solidity of Perpignan for all time.

Beside the Loge is the Hôtel de Ville, with its round-arched doorways and windows, iron-barred in real mediæval fashion, with dainty colonnettes between.

Next is the ancient Palais de Justice, adjoining the Hôtel de Ville. It has a battery of mullioned twin windows of narrow aperture, and is in perfect keeping with the mediæval trinity of which it is a part.

The cathedral of St. Jean is another of Perpignan's historical monuments, but it is far from lovely at first glance, an atrocious façade having been added by some "restorer" in recent times with more suitable ideas for building fortresses than churches.

The tower of the cathedral is modern and, taken as a whole, is undeniably effective with its iron cage and bell-rack. The original tower

fell two centuries ago during an extra violent blow of the *tramontane*.

Passing centuries have changed Perpignan but little, and aside from the boulevards and malls the streets are narrow and tortuous and almost devoid of sidewalks. There are innumerable little bijou houses of Gothic or Renaissance times, and in one narrow street, called quaintly Main de Fer, one sees a real, unspoiled bit of the sixteenth century. One curious house, now occupied by the Cercle de l'Union, dates from 1508, and was erected for one Sancho or Xanxo. Its interior, so far as its entrance hall and stairway are concerned, remains as it was when first built.

The Rue Père Pigne has a legend connected with it which is worth recounting. The Père Pigne, or Pigna, as his name was in Catalan-Spanish days, was a cattle-herder in the upper valley of the Tet, beside the village of Llagone. Weary of his lonely life he whispered to the rocks and rills his desire for a less rude calling elsewhere, and the river took him up in its arms and washed him incontinently down on to the lowland plain of Roussillon, and, by some occult means or other, suggested to the old man that his mission in life was to found

there a fertile, prosperous city. Thus Perpignan came to be founded.

There may be doubts as to the authenticity of the story, but there was enough of reality attached to it to have led the city fathers to name a street after the hero of the adventure.

Since the demolishment of its walls Perpignan has lost much of its mediæval character, but nothing can take away the life and gaiety of its streets and boulevards, its shops, its hotels and cafés. Perpignan comes very near being the liveliest little capital of old France existing under the modern republic of to-day.

The population is cosmopolitan, like that of Marseilles, and every aspect of it is picturesque. The vegetable sellers, the fruit merchants, the water and ice purveyors, all dark-eyed Catalan girls, are delightful in face, figure and carriage. Their baggy white coiffes set off their dark complexions and jet black hair. The men of this race are more serious when they are at business (they are gay enough at other times) and you may see twenty red onion or garlic dealers and never see a smile, whereas an orange seller, a woman or girl, always has her mouth open in a laugh and her headdress is always bobbing about;

nothing about her is passive and life to her is a dream, though it is serious business to the men.

The taste of the Catalans of Perpignan for bright colouring in their dress is akin to that of their brothers and sisters in Spain. The fact that both slopes of the Eastern Pyrenees were under the same domination up to the reign of Louis XIII may account for this.

The Citadelle of Perpignan is closed to the general tourist. None may enter without permission from the military authorities, and that, for a stranger, is difficult to obtain. The great gateway to the Citadelle is a marvel of originality with its four archaic caryatides. Within is the site of the ancient palace of the kings of Majorca, but the primitive fragments have been rebuilt into the later works of Louis XI, Charles V and Vauban until to-day it is but a species of fortress, and not at all like a great domestic establishment such as one usually recognizes by the name of palace.

The Église de la Real, beside the Citadelle, was built in the fourteenth century and is celebrated for the council held here in 1408 by the Anti-Pope, Pierre de Luna.

There are some bibliographical gems in Perpignan's Bibliothèque which would make a new-

world collector envious. There are numerous rare incunabulæ and precious manuscripts, the most notable being the "Missel de l'Abbaye d'Arles en Vallespir" (XIIth century) and the "Missel de la Confrere," illustrated with miniatures (XVth century), worthy, each of them, to be ranked with King René's "Book of Hours" at Aix so far as mere beauty goes.

The habituated French traveller connects *rilettes* with Tours, the Cannebière with Marseilles, Les Lices with Arles, and, with Perpignan, the *platanes* — great plane-trees, planted in a double line and forming one of the most remarkable promenades, just beyond the Castillet, that one has ever seen. It is a Prado, a Corso, and a Rambla all in one.

The Carnival de Perpignan is as brilliant a fête as one may see in any Spanish or Italian city, where such celebrations are classic, and this Allée des Platanes is then at its gayest.

Another of the specialties of Perpignan is the *micocoulier,* or *"bois de Perpignan,"* something better suited for making whip handles than any other wood known. Each French city has its special industry; it may elsewhere be *bérets, sabots,* truffles, pork-pies or sausages, but here it is whips.

Perpignan has given two great men to the

world, Jean Blanca and Hyacinthe Rigaud. Jean Blanca, Bourgeois de Perpignan, was first consul of the city when Louis XI besieged it in 1475. His son had been captured by the besiegers and word was sent that he would be put to death if the gates were not opened forthwith. The courageous consul replied simply that the ties of blood and paternal love are not great enough to make one a traitor to his God, his king and his native land. His son was, in consequence, massacred beneath his very eyes.

Hyacinthe Rigaud was a celebrated painter, born at Perpignan in the eighteenth century. His talents were so great that he was known as the *Van Dyck français.*

Canet is a sort of seaside overflow of Perpignan, a dozen kilometres away on the shores of the Mediterranean. On the way one passes the scant, clumsy remains of the old twelfth-century Château Roussillon, now remodelled into a little ill-assorted cluster of houses, a chapel and a storehouse. The circular tower, really a svelt and admirable pile, is all that remains of the château of other days, the last vestige of the dignity that once was Ruscino's, the ancient capital of the Comté de Roussillon.

At Canet itself there are imposing ruins, sit-

McAlarney
ateau-Roussillon
1906

ting hard by the sea, of centuries of regal splendour, though now they rank only as an attraction of the humble little village of Roussillon. The belfry of Canet's humble church looks like a little brother of that of "Perpignan-le-Rouge" and points plainly to the fact that styles in architecture are as distinctly local as are fashions in footwear.

Canet to-day is a watering place for the people of Perpignan, but in the past it was venerated by the holy hermits and monks of Roussillon for much the same attractions that it to-day possesses. Saint Galdric, patron of the Abbey of Saint Martin du Canigou, and, later, Saints Abdon and Sennen were frequenters of the spot.

Rivesaltes, practically a suburb of Perpignan, a dozen kilometres north, is approached by as awful a road as one will find in France. The town will not suggest much or appeal greatly to the passing traveller, unless indeed he stops there for a little refreshment and has a glass of *muscat,* that sweet, sticky liquor which might well be called simply raisin juice. It is a "*spécialité du pays,*" and really should be tasted, though it may be had anywhere in the neighbourhood. It is a wine celebrated throughout France.

At Salces, on the Route Nationale, just beyond Narbonne and Rivesaltes, is an old fortification built by Charles V on one of his ambitious pilgrimages across France. A great square of masonry, with a donjon tower in the middle and with walls of great thickness, it looks formidable enough, but modern Krupp or Creusot cannon would doubtless make short work of it.

A dozen kilometres to the south of Perpignan is Elne, an ancient cathedral town. From afar one admires the sky line of the town and a nearer acquaintance but increases one's pleasure and edification.

The Phœnicians, or the Iberians, founded the city, perhaps, five hundred years before the beginning of the Christian era, and Hannibal in his passage of the Pyrenees rested here. Another five hundred years and it had a Roman emperor for its guardian, and Constantine, who would have made it great and wealthy, surrounded it with ramparts and built a donjon castle, of which unfortunately not a vestige remains.

Ages came and went, and the city dwindled in size, and the church grew poor with it, until at last, in 1601, Pope Clement VIII (a French Pope, by the way) authorized its bishop to

move to Perpignan, where indeed the see has been established ever since.

Of the past feudal greatness of Elne only a fragmentary rampart and the fortified Portes de Collioure and Perpignan remain. The rest must be taken on faith. Nevertheless, Elne is a place to be omitted from no man's itinerary in these parts.

The great wealth and beauty of Elne's cathedral cannot be recounted here. They would require a monograph to themselves. Little by little much has been taken from it, however, until only the glorious fabric remains. To cite an example, its great High Altar, made of beaten silver and gold, was, under the will of the canons of the church themselves, in the time of Louis XV, sent to the mint at Perpignan and coined up into good current *écus* for the benefit of some one, history does not state whom.

From the beautiful cloister, in the main a tenth-century work, and the largest and most beautiful in the Pyrenees, one steps out on a little *perron* when another ravishing Mediterranean panorama unfolds itself. There are others as fine; that from the platform of the château at Carcassonne; from the terrace at Pau; or from the citadel-fortress church at

Béziers. This at Elne, however, is the equal of any. Below are the plains of Roussillon and Vallespir, red and green and gold like a *tapis d'Orient,* with the Albéres mountains for a background, while away in the distance, in a soft glimmering haze of a blue horizon, is the Mediterranean. It is all truly beautiful.

In the direction of the Spanish frontier Argelès-sur-Mer comes next. It has historic value and its inhabitants number three thousand, though few recognize this, or have even heard its name. As a matter of fact, it might have become one of the great maritime cities of the eastern slope of the Pyrenees except that fickle fate ruled otherwise.

The name of Argelès-sur-Mer figured first in a document of Lothaire, King of France, in 981; and, three centuries later, it was the meeting-place between the kings of Majorca and Aragon and the princes of Roussillon, when, at the instigation of Philippe le Bel, an expiring treaty was to be renewed.

The city at that time belonged to the Royaume de Majorque, and Pierre IV of Aragon, in the Château d'Amauros, defended it through a mighty siege.

Five hundred metres above the sea, and to be seen to-day, was also the Tour des Pujols,

another fortification of the watch-tower or block-house variety, frequently seen throughout the Pyrenees.

At the taking of Roussillon by Louis XI, Argelès-sur-Mer was in turn in possession of the King of Aragon and the King of France. Under Louis XIII the city surrendered with no resistance to the Maréchal de la Meilleraye; and later fell again to the Spaniards, becoming truly French in 1646.

It was a *Ville Royale* with a right of vote in the Catalonian parliament, and enjoyed great privileges up to the Revolution, a fact which is plainly demonstrated by the archives of the city preserved at the local Mairie.

In 1793 the Spanish flag again flew from its walls; but the brave Dugommier, the real saviour of this part of the Midi of France in revolutionary times, regained the city for the French for all time.

Five kilometres south of Argelès-sur-Mer is Collioure, the ancient Port Illiberries, the seaport of Elne. It is one of the most curiously interesting of all the coast towns of Roussillon. Here one sees the best of the Catalan types of Roussillon, gentle maidens, coiffe on head, carrying water jugs with all the grace that nature gave them, and rough, hardy, red-

capped sailors as salty in their looks and talk as the sea itself.

Collioure is not a *grande ville*. Even now it is a mere fishing port, and no one thinks of doing more than passing through its gates and out again. Nevertheless its historic interest endures. From the fact that Roman coins and pottery have been found here, its bygone position has been established as one of prominence. In the seventh century it was in the hands of the Visigoths and three centuries later Lothaire, King of France, gave permission to Wifred, Comte de Roussillon et d'Empories, to develop and exploit the ancient settlement anew.

Here, in 1280, Guillaume de Puig d'Orphila founded a Dominican convent; and it is the Église de Collioure of to-day, sitting snugly by the entrance to the little port, that formed the church of the old conventual establishment. In 1415 the Anti-Pope Benoit XIII, Pierre de Luna, took ship here, frightened from France by the menaces of Sigismond. Louis XI, when he sought to reduce Roussillon, would have treated Collioure hardly, but so earnest and skilful was its defence that it escaped the indignities thrust upon Elne and Perpignan. The kings of Spain for a time dominated the city,

Blanche McManus
1905
Collioure

and during their rule the fortress known to-day as the Fort St. Elne was constructed.

One of the red-letter incidents of Collioure was the shipwreck off its harbour of the Infanta of Spain, as she was en route by sea from Barcelona to Naples in 1584. A galley slave carried the noble lady on his shoulders as he swam to shore. News of the adventure came to the Bishop of Elne who was also plain Jean Terès, a Catalan and governor of the province; and he caused the unfortunate lady to be brought to the episcopal palace for further care. In return the princess used her influence at court and had the prelate made Archbishop of Tarragona, viceroy of Catalonia, and counsellor to the king of Spain. Of the *forçat* who really saved the lady, the chroniclers are blank. One may hope that he obtained some recompense, or at least liberty.

There are numerous fine old Gothic and Renaissance houses here, with carved statues in niches, hanging lamps, great bronze knockers, and iron hinges, interesting enough to incite the envy of a curio-collector.

Collioure has a great fête on the sixteenth of August of each year, the Fête de Saint Vincent. There is much processioning going and coming from the sea in ships and gaily

decorated boats, and after all fireworks on the water. The religious significance of it all is lost in the general rejoicing; but it's a most impressive sight nevertheless.

Collioure is also famous for its fishing. The sardines and anchovies taken offshore from Collioure are famous all over France and Russia where gastronomy is an art. Two classic excursions are to be made from Collioure; one is to the hermitage of Notre Dame de Consolation, and the other to the Abbey of Valbonne. The first is simply a ruined hermitage seated on a little verdure-clad plateau high above the vineyards and olive orchards of the plain; but it is remarkably attractive, and it takes no great wealth of imagination to people the courtyard with the holy men of other days. Now its ruined, gray walls are set off with lichens, vines and rose-trees; and it is as quiet and peaceful a retreat from the world and its nerve-racking conventions as may be found.

The Abbey of Valbonne is practically the counterpart of Notre Dame de Consolation so far as unworldliness goes. It was founded in 1242, but left practically deserted from the fifteenth century, after the invasion of Roussillon by Louis XI. The Tour Massane, a great guardian watch-tower, dominates the ruins and

Château d'Ultrera

marks the spot where Yolande, a queen of Aragon, lies buried.

Inland from Collioure, perhaps five kilometres in a bee line, but a dozen or more by a sinuous mountain path, high up almost on the crest of the Albères, is the château fort of Ultrera. Its name alone, without further description, indicates its picturesqueness, probably derived from the *castrum vulturarium,* or nest of vultures of Roman times. What the history of this stronghold may have been in later mediæval times no one knows; but it was a Roman outpost in the year 1073 and later a Visigoth stronghold. It was a fortress guarding the route to and from Spain via Narbonne, Salies, Ruscino, Elne, Saint André, Pave and so on to the Col de la Carbossière. Now this road is only a mule track and all the considerable traffic between the two countries passes via the Col de Perthus to the westward.

The peak upon which sits Ultrera culminates at a height of five hundred and seventeen metres, and rises abruptly from the seashore plain in most spectacular fashion. The ruins are but ruins to be sure, but the grim suggestion of what they once stood for is very evident. En route from Perpignan or Collioure one passes the Ermitage de Notre Dame de Château, for-

merly a place of pious pilgrimage, and where travellers may still find refreshment.

Banyuls-sur-Mer is the last French station on the railway leading into Spain. At Banyuls even a keen observer of men and things would find it hard, if he had been plumped down here in the middle of the night, to tell, on awaking in the morning, whether he was in Spain, Italy or Africa. The country round about is a blend of all three; with, perhaps, a little of Greece. It possesses a delicious climate and a flora almost as sub-tropical and as varied as that of Madeira.

No shadow hangs over Banyuls-sur-Mer. The sea scintillates at its very doors; and, opposite, lie the gracious plains and valleys which reach to the crowning crests of the Pyrenees in the southwest. It is an ancient bourg, and its history recurs again and again in that of Roussillon. Turn by turn one reads in the pages of its chroniclers the names of the Comtes d'Empories-Roussillon, and the Rois de Majorque et d'Aragon.

Lothaire and the then reigning Comte d'Empories came to an arrangement in the tenth century whereby the hill above the town was to be fortified by the building of a château or *mas*. This was done; but the seaport never pros-

pered greatly until the union of France and Roussillon, when its people, whose chief source of prosperity had been a contraband trade, took their proper place in the affairs of the day.

The National Convention subsequently formulated a decree that the "*Banyulais ayant bien merité de la patrie,*" and ordered that an obelisk be erected commemorative of the capitulation of the Spaniards. For long years this none too lovely monument was unbuilt, — "*Banyuls est si loin de Paris,*" said the habitant in explanation — but to-day it stands in all its ugliness on the quay by the waterside.

CHAPTER VII

THE CANIGOU AND ANDORRA

THERE is a section of the Pyrenees that may well be called "the unknown Pyrenees." The main chain has been travelled, explored and exploited for long years, but the Canigou, lying between the rivers Tet and Tech, has only come to be known since half a dozen years ago when the French Alps Club built a châlet-hotel on the plateau of Cortalets. This is at an altitude of 2,200 metres, from which point it is a two hour and a half climb to the summit.

All the beauties of the main chain of the Pyrenees are here in this side-long spur just before it plunges its forefoot into the blue waters of the Mediterranean. It is majestic, and full of sweet flowering valleys stretching off northward and eastward. Unless one would conquer the Andes or the Himalayas he will find the Canigou, Puig, Campiardos, or Puigmal, from eight to ten thousand feet in height, all he will care to undertake without embracing mountaineering as a profession.

The great charm of the Canigou is its comparatively isolated grandeur; for the mountains slope down nearly to sea level, before they rise again and form the main chain.

A makeshift road runs up as far as the Club's châlet, but walking or mule back are the only practicable means of approach. To-day it is all primitive and unspoiled, but some one in the neighbourhood has been to Switzerland and learned the rudiments of "exploitation" and every little while threatens a funicular railway — and a tea room.

In the châlet are twenty-five beds ready for occupancy, at prices ranging from a franc and a half to two francs and a half in summer. In winter the establishment is closed; but those venturesome spirits who would undertake the climb may get a key to the snow-buried door at Perpignan.

One may dispute the fact that Canigou is as fine as Mont Blanc, Mount McKinley or Popocatepetl, but its three thousand majestic metres of tree-grown height are quite as pleasing and varied in their outline as any other peak on earth.

The Savoyard says: "*Ce n'est tout de même pas le Mont Blanc avec ses 4,800 mètres,*" and

you admit it, but one doesn't size up a mountain for its mere mathematical valuation.

The Canigou stands out by itself, and that is why its majesty is so impressive. This is also true of Mont Ventoux in Provence, but how many tourists of the personally conducted order realize there are any mountains in Europe save the Alps and its kingly Mont Blanc — which they fondly but falsely believe is in Switzerland.

High above, as the pilgrims of to-day wind their way among the moss-grown rocks of the mountainside, rises the antique Romano-Byzantine tower and ruins of the old Abbey of Saint Martin.

Built perilously on a rocky peak, the abbey is a regular eagle's nest in fact and fancy. In grandiose melancholy it sits and regards the sweeping plains of Roussillon as it did nearly a thousand years ago. The storms of winter, and the ravages incident to time have used it rather badly. It has been desecrated and pillaged, too, but all this has been stopped; and the abbey church has, with restoration and care, again taken its place among the noble religious monuments of France.

At the beginning of the eleventh century the Comte de Cerdagne and Conflent, and his wife

The Pilgrimage to St. Martin

Guifred, gave this eerie site, at an altitude of considerably more than a thousand metres above the sea, to a community of Benedictine monks for the purpose of founding a monastery. Ten years later the Bishop Oliba, of Vic-d'Osona in Catalonia, consecrated the church and put it under the patronage of Saint Martin; and a Bull of Pope Sergius IV, dated 1011 and preserved in the Musée at Perpignan, confirmed the act and granted the institution the privilege of being known as a mitred abbey, bestowing on its governor the canonical title. It is this antique monastery which rises to-day from its ruins. It has been sadly robbed in times past of columns, capitals and keystones, and many a neighbouring farm-house bears evidence of having, in part, been built up from its ruins.

The yearly Catalan pilgrimage to St. Martin de Canigou and the services held in the ruined old abbey are two remarkably impressive sights. The soft, dulcet Catalan speech seems to lend itself readily to the mother tongue of Latin in all its purity. A Spanish poet of some generations ago, Jacinto Verdaguer — called the Mistral-espagnol — wrote a wonderfully vivid epic, " Canigou," with, naturally, the old abbey in the centre of the stage.

In Verdaguer's charming poem, written in the Catalan tongue, the old abbey tower is made to moan: — *" Campanes ja no tinch "* — *" Bells I have no longer."* This is no longer true, for in 1904 the omnific " Évêque de Canigou " (really the Bishop of Perpignan) caused to be hung in the old crenelated tower a new peal, and to-day there rings forth from the campanile such reverberating melody as has not been known for centuries: *" Campanes ja tinch " — " I have my bell; Oliba has come to life again; he has brought them back to me."*

The present Bishop of Perpignan, Monseigneur de Carsalade du Pont, in recent years took steps to acquire proprietorship in the abbey church, that it might be safe from further depredations, and solicited donations throughout his diocese of Perpignan and Catalonia for the enterprise.

In 1902, this prelate and his " faithful " from all the Catalan country, in Spain as well as France, made the Fête de Saint Martin (11th November) memorable. To give a poetic and sentimental importance to this occasion the bishop invited the " Consistoire " of the " Jeux Floraux " of Barcelona to hold their forty-fourth celebration here at the same time.

On a golden November sunlit day, amid

the ring of mountains all resplendent with a brilliant autumn verdure, this grandest of all Fêtes of St. Martin was held. In the midst of the throng were the Bishop of Perpignan in his pontifical robes, and the mitred Abbé de la Trappe — a venerable monk with snowy beard and vestments. At the head of the procession floated the reconstituted banner of the Comte Guifred, bearing the inscription "*Guifre par la gracia de Dieu Comte de Cerdanya y de Conflent.*" The local clergy from all over Roussillon and Catalonia were in line, and thousands of lay pilgrims besides.

At the church, when the procession finally arrived, was celebrated a Pontifical Mass. At the conclusion of this religious ceremony the Catalans of Barcelona took possession of the old basilica and the "*fête littéraire*" commenced.

The emotion throughout both celebrations was profound, and at the end there broke out seemingly interminable applause and shouts of "*Vive la Catalogne!*" "*Vive le Roussillon.*" "*Vive Barcelone!*" "*Vive Perpignan!*"

Back of the Canigou, between it and the main chain of the Pyrenees, is the smiling valley of the Tech and Vallespir.

The route from Perpignan into Spain passes

by Le Boulou, on the Tech. If one is en route to Barcelona, and is not an automobilist, let him make his way to Le Boulou, which is really an incipient watering-place, and take the diligence up over the Col de Perthus and down into Spain on the other side. The hasty travellers may prefer the "Paris-Barcelone Express," but they will know not the joy of travel, and the entrance into Spain through the cut of Cerbère is most unlovely.

France has fortified the Col de Perthus, but Spain only guards her interests by her *carabiniers* and *douaniers*. The little bourg of Perthus consists of but one long main street, formed in reality by the "Route Internationale," of which one end is French and the other, the Calle Mayor, is Spanish.

Above the village is Fort Bellegarde. It looks imposing, but if guns could get near enough it would doubtless fall in short order. It was built by Vauban under Louis XIV, in 1679, on a mamelon nearly fifteen hundred feet above the pass, and its situation is most commanding. To the west was another gateway into Spain, once more frequented than the Col de Perthus, but it has been made impracticable by the military strategists as a part of the game of war.

Just beyond Le Boulou is Céret, a little town at an elevation of a couple of hundred metres above the sea.

Céret's bridge has been attributed to the Romans, and to the devil. The round loophole, on either side of the great arch, is supposed to have been a malicious afterthought of the engineers who built the bridge to head off the evil influences of the devil who set them to the task. The application is difficult to follow, and the legend might as well apply to the eyes painted on the bows of a Chinese junk. As a matter of record the bridge was built in 1321, by whom will perhaps never be known.

Amélie-les-Bains is ten kilometres higher up in the valley of Tech, and has become a thermal station of repute, due entirely to the impetus first given to it by the spouse of France's " Citizen King " in 1840, whose name it bears.

Bagnères-de-Luchon, or more familiarly Luchon, is called the queen of Pyrenean watering-places. If this is so Amélie-les-Bains is certainly the princess, with its picturesque ring of mountain background, and its guardian sentinel the Canigou rising immediately in front. It enjoys a climate the softest in all the Pyrenees, a sky exempt of all the vicissitudes of the seasons, and a winter without freezing.

Just north of Amélie-les-Bains is the little village of Palada. It sits halfway up the mountainside, beneath the protection of a once formidable château, to-day in ruins, its gray green stones crumbling before the north wind which blows here in the winter months with a severity that blows knots from their holes, — at least this is the local description of it, though the writer has never experienced the like. The inhabitants of the poor little village of Palada got hot-headed in 1871, when Paris was under the Commune, and had a little affair of their own on the same order.

The whole valley of the Tech, being a near neighbour of Spain, has that hybrid French-Spanish aspect which gives a distinctive shade of life and colour to everything about. The red cap of the Catalan is as often seen as the blue hat of the Languedoçian.

At Arles-sur-Tech, not for a moment to be confounded with Arles-en-Provence, is a remarkable series of architectural monuments, as well as a charming old church which dates back to the twelfth century, and a Roman sarcophagus which mysteriously fills itself with water, and performs miracles on the thirtieth of each July. Within the church are the relics of the Christian martyrs, Abdon and Sennen,

brought from Rome in the ninth century. The charming little mountain town is at once an historic and a religious shrine.

High up in the valley of the Tech is Prats-de-Mollo, with its guardian fortress of La-garde high above on the flank of a hill. This tiny fortress looks hardly more than a block-house to-day, but in its time it was ranked as one of the best works of Vauban. To keep it company, one notes the contrasting ruins of the feudal Château de Peille hard by.

The town itself is fortified by a surrounding rampart, still well preserved, with great gates and pepper-box towers well distributed around its circumference. In olden times these ram-parts held off the besieging kings of Aragon, but to-day they would quickly succumb to mod-ern guns and ammunition.

Along with its bygone attractions Prats de Mollo is trying hard to become a resort, and there are hotels of a modernity and excellence which are surprising for a small town of twenty-five hundred inhabitants, so far off the beaten track. In spite of this no amount of improve-ments and up-to-date ideas will ever eradicate the mediæval aspect of the place, unless the walls themselves are razed. Its churches, too, are practically fortresses, like those of its

neighbour Arles, and the whole aspect of the region is warlike.

The principal church, which dominates the city with its great Roman tower, is a remarkable construction in more ways than one. It is a veritable church militant, for from its great crenelated tower one may pass by an underground vaulted gallery to and from Fort Lagarde. There is no such view to be had up and down the valley and off towards the Spanish frontier as from its platform. The interior is most curious; more Spanish than French in its profuse application of gold and tinsel. A gigantic *rétable* of the time of Louis XIV is the chief artistic accessory within.

There is no carriage road from Prats into Spain, but a mule track leads to the Spanish village of Camprodon.

In a little corner of the Pyrenees, between Vallespir and the valley of the Tech — where lie Céret, Arles and Prats-de-Mollo — and the valley of the Tet, around the western flank of the Canigou, is the Cerdagne, a little district of other days, known to-day only to travellers to or from Perpignan or Quillan into Andorra, via Hospitalet or Bourg-Madame. Vauban fortified the Col de la Perche on the Spanish border to protect the three districts ceded to Louis

XIII by Spain — Cerdagne, Capcir and Conflent.

Almost the whole of the Cerdagne is mountains and valleys; and until one reaches the valley of the Tet, at Villefranche or Prades, one is surrounded by a silent strangeness which is conducive to the thought of high ideals and the worship of nature, but drearily lonesome to one who likes to study men and manners. This is about the wildest, ruggedest, and least spoiled corner of France to-day. Nothing else in the Pyrenees or the Alps can quite approach it for solitude.

Villefranche — Conflent and Barcelonnette in the Basses-Alpes might be sisters, so like are they in their make-up and surroundings. Each have great fortresses with parapets of brick, and great stairways of ninety steps leading up from the lower town. The surrounding houses — half-fortified, narrow-windowed, and bellicose-looking — stand as grim and silent to-day as if they feared imminent invasion.

Far away in the historic past Villefranche was founded by a Comte de Cerdagne who surrounded himself with a little band of adventurers who were willing to turn their hand to fighting, smuggling or any other profitable business.

Vauban took this old foundation and surrounded it with walls anew, and gave the present formidable aspect to the place, building its ramparts of the red marble or porphyry extracted from the neighbouring mountains. Its naturally protected position, set deep in a rocky gorge, gave added strength to the fortress.

Louis XIV, in one of his irrational moments, built a château here and proposed living in it, but fate ruled otherwise. About the only connection of the king with it was when he chained up four women in a dungeon. The chains and rings in the walls may be seen to-day.

Villefranche, its fortifications and its château are admirable examples of the way of doing things in Roussillon between the tenth and fourteenth centuries; and the town is typically characteristic of a feudal bourg, albeit it has no very splendid or magnificent appointments.

Prades, just east of Villefranche, dates its years from the foundation of Charles-le-Chauve in 844, and has a fourteenth and fifteenth century château (in ruins) affectionately referred to by the habitant as "La Reine Marguerite." Assiduous research fails however to connect either Marguerite de France

Villefranche

or Marguerite de Navarre with it or its history.

Near Villefranche is the little paradise of Vernet. It contains both a new and an old town, each distinct one from the other, but forming together a delightful retreat. It has a château, too, which is something a good deal better than a ruin, though it was dismantled in the seventeenth century.

Vernet has a regular population of twelve hundred, and frequently as many more visitors. This is what makes the remarkable combination of the new and the old. The ancient town is built in amphitheatre form on a rocky hillside above which rises the parish church and the château which, since its partial demolition, has lately been restored. The new Vernet, the thermal resort, dates from 1879, when it first began to be exploited as a watering-place, and took the name of Vernet-les-Bains for use in the guide books and railway time-tables. Naturally this modern-built town with its hotels, its casino and its bath houses, is less lovely and winsome than its older sister on the hill. There are twelve springs here, and some of them were known to the Romans in the tenth century.

On towards the frontier and the mountain

road into the tiny Pyrenean state of Andorra is Mont Louis. Just before Mont Louis, on the main road leading out from Perpignan, one passes below the walls of the highest fortress in France.

Within a couple of kilometres of Mont Louis, at the little village of Planes, is one of the most curious churches in France. It is what is known as a "round church," and there are not many like it in or out of France, if one excepts the baptistries at Pisa and Ravenna, and at Aix-en-Provence, and Charlemagne's church at Aix-la-Chapelle. This Église de Planes is more like a mosque than a church in its outlines, and its circular walls with its curious mission-like bell-tower (surely built by some Spanish *padre*) present a ground plan and a sky line exceedingly bizarre.

Beyond Mont Louis and close under the shadow of Spain is Bourg-Madame. A peculiar interest attaches to Bourg-Madame by reason of the fact that it is a typical Franco-Spanish frontier town, a mixture of men and manners of the two nations. It sits on one side of the tiny river Sevre, which marks the frontier at this point, a river so narrow that a plank could bridge it, and the comings and goings of French and Spanish travellers across

this diminutive bridge will suggest many things to a writer of romantic fiction. Bourg-Madame is a good locale for a novel, and plenty of plots can be had ready-made if one will but gossip with the French and Spanish gendarmes hanging about, or the driver of the diligence who makes the daily round between Bourg-Madame and Puigcerda in Spain.

In 1905 there was held a great fête at Bourg-Madame and Puigcerda, in celebration of the anniversary of the signing of the Franco-Spanish Convention of 1904, relative to the Trans-Pyrenean railways. It was all very practical and there was very little romance about it though it was a veritable fête day for all the mountaineers.

The mayors from both the French and Spanish sides of the frontier, and the municipal councillors and other prominent persons from Barcelona met at the baths of Escalde, at an altitude of fourteen hundred metres. M. Delcassé, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, described the various stages of Franco-Spanish relations leading up to the convention as to the Trans-Pyrenean railways, which he hoped to see rapidly constructed. He said that while in office he had done all in his power to unite France and Spain. "He drank to his dear

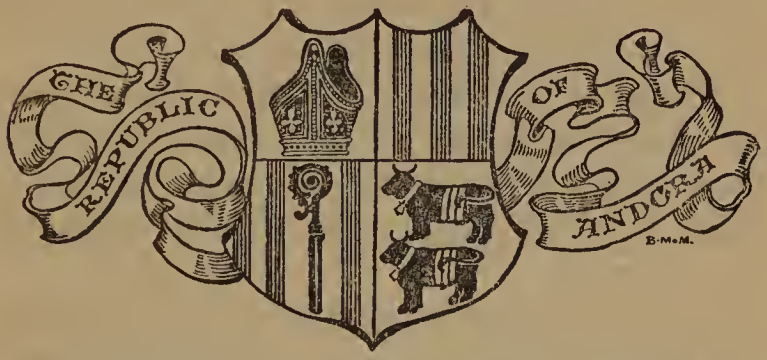
friends of Spain, to the noble Spanish nation, to its young sovereign, who had only to show himself to the public to win universal sympathy, to the gracious queen, daughter of a great country, the friend of France, who never tired of formulating good wishes for the prosperity and grandeur of valiant Spain." After the fêtes on the French side, the party crossed the frontier and continued this international festival at Puigcerda. The fêtes ended long after midnight, after a gala performance at the theatre, at which the Marseillaise and the Spanish national air were enthusiastically cheered.

The French highroad turns northwest at Bourg-Madame, and via Porta and Porté and the Tour de Carol — perhaps a relic of the Moors, but more likely a reminder of Charlemagne, who chased them from these parts — one comes to Hospitalet, from which point one enters Andorra by crossing the main chain of the Pyrenees at the Col de Puymorins.

"A beggarly village," wrote a traveller of Hospitalet, just previous to the Revolution, "with a shack of an inn that made me almost shrink. Some cutthroat figures were eating black bread, and their faces looked so much like galley-slaves that I thought I heard their

chains rattle. I looked at their legs, but found them free."

There's good material here for a novel of adventure, or was a hundred years ago, but now the still humble inn of Hospitalet is quiet and peaceful.



The little republic of Andorra, hidden away in the fastnesses of the Pyrenees between France and Spain, its allegiance divided between the Bishop of Urgel in Spain and the French Government, is a relic of mediævalism which will probably never fall before the swift advance of twentieth century ideas of progress. At least it will never be over-run by automobiles.

From French or Spanish territory this little unknown land is to be reached by what is called a *" route carrossable,"* but the road is so bad that the sure-footed little donkeys of the Pyrenees are by far the best means of locomotion

unless one would go up on foot, a matter of twenty kilometres or more from Hospitalet in Spanish or Porté in French territory.

This is a good place to remark that the donkeys of the Pyrenees largely come from Spain, but curiously enough the donkeys and mules of Spain are mostly bred in the Vendée, just south of the Loire, in France.

The political status of Andorra is most peculiar, but since it has endured without interruption (and this in spite of wars and rumours of war) for six centuries, it seems to be all that is necessary.

A relic of the Middle Ages, Andorra-Viella, the city, and its six thousand inhabitants live in their lonesome retirement much as they did in feudal times, except for the fact that an occasional newspaper smuggled in from France or Spain gives a new topic of conversation.

This paternal governmental arrangement which cares for the welfare of the people of Andorra, the city and the province, is the outcome of a treaty signed by Pierre d'Urg and Roger-Bernard, the third Comte de Foix, giving each other reciprocal rights. There's nothing very strange about this; it was common custom in the Middle Ages for lay and ecclesiastical seigneurs to make such compacts, but

the marvel is that it has endured so well with governments rising and falling all about, and grafters and pretenders and dictators ruling every bailiwick in which they can get a foothold. Feudal government may have had some bad features, but certainly the republics and democracies of to-day, to say nothing of absolute monarchies, have some, too.

The ways of access between France and Andorra are numerous enough; but of the eight only two — and those not all the way — are really practicable for wheeled traffic. The others are mere trails, or mule-paths.

The people of Andorra, as might be inferred, are all ardent Catholics; and for a tiny country like this to have a religious seminary, as that at Urgel, is remarkable of itself.

Public instruction is of late making headway, but half a century ago the shepherd and labouring population — perhaps nine-tenths of the whole — had little learning or indeed need for it. Their manners and customs are simple and severe and little has changed in modern life from that of their great-great-great-grandfathers.

Each family has a sort of a chief or official head, and the eldest son always looks for a wife among the families of his own class. Seldom,

if ever, does the married son quit the paternal roof, so large households are the rule. In a family where there are only girls the eldest is the heir, and she may only marry with a cadet of another family by his joining his name with hers. Perhaps it is this that originally set the fashion for hyphenated names.

The Andorrans are generally robust and well built; the maladies of more populous regions are practically unknown among them. This speaks much for the simple life!

Costumes and dress are rough and simple and of heavy woollens, clipped from the sheep and woven on the spot. Public officers, the few representatives of officialdom who exist, alone make any pretence at following the fashions. The women occupy a very subordinate position in public affairs. They may not be present at receptions and functions and not even at mass when it is said by the bishop. Crime is infrequent, and simple, light punishments alone are inflicted. Things are not so uncivilized in Andorra as one might think!

In need all men may be called upon to serve as soldiers, and each head of a family must have a rifle and ball at hand at all times. In other words, he must be able to protect himself

against marauders. This does away with the necessity of a large standing police force.

Commerce and industry are free of all taxation in Andorra, and customs dues apply on but few articles. For this reason there is not a very heavy tax on a people who are mostly cultivators and graziers.

There is little manufacturing industry, as might be supposed, and what is made — save by hand and in single examples — is of the most simple character. " Made in Germany " or " Fabriqué en Belgique " are the marks one sees on most of the common manufactured articles. " Those terrible Germans! " is a trite, but true saying.

The Andorrans are a simple, proud, gullible people, who live to-day in the past, of the past and for the past; *" Les vallées et souverainetés de l'Andorre "* are to them to-day just what they always were — a little world of their own.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HIGH VALLEY OF THE AUDE

The Aude, rising close under the crest of the Pyrenees, flows down to the Mediterranean between Narbonne and Béziers. It is one of the daintiest mountain streams imaginable as it flows down through the Gorges de St. Georges and by Axat and Quillan to Carcassonne, and the following simple lines by Auguste Baluffe describe it well.

"Dans le fond des bleus horizons,
Les villages ont des maisons
Toutes blanches,
Que l'on aperçoit à travers
Les bois, formant des rideaux verts
De leurs branches."

At Carcassonne the Aude joins that natural waterway of the Pyrenees, the Garonne, through the Canal du Midi. This great Canal-de-Deux-Mers, as it is often called, connecting with the Garonne at Toulouse, joins the Mediterranean at the Golfe des Lions, with the Atlantic at the Golfe de Gascogne, and serves in its course Car-

cassonne, Narbonne and Béziers. The Canal du Midi was one of the marvels of its time when built (1668), though it has since been superseded by many others. It was one of the first masterpieces of the French engineers, and may have been the inspiration of De Lesseps in later years.

Boileau in his "Epitre au Roi," said:—

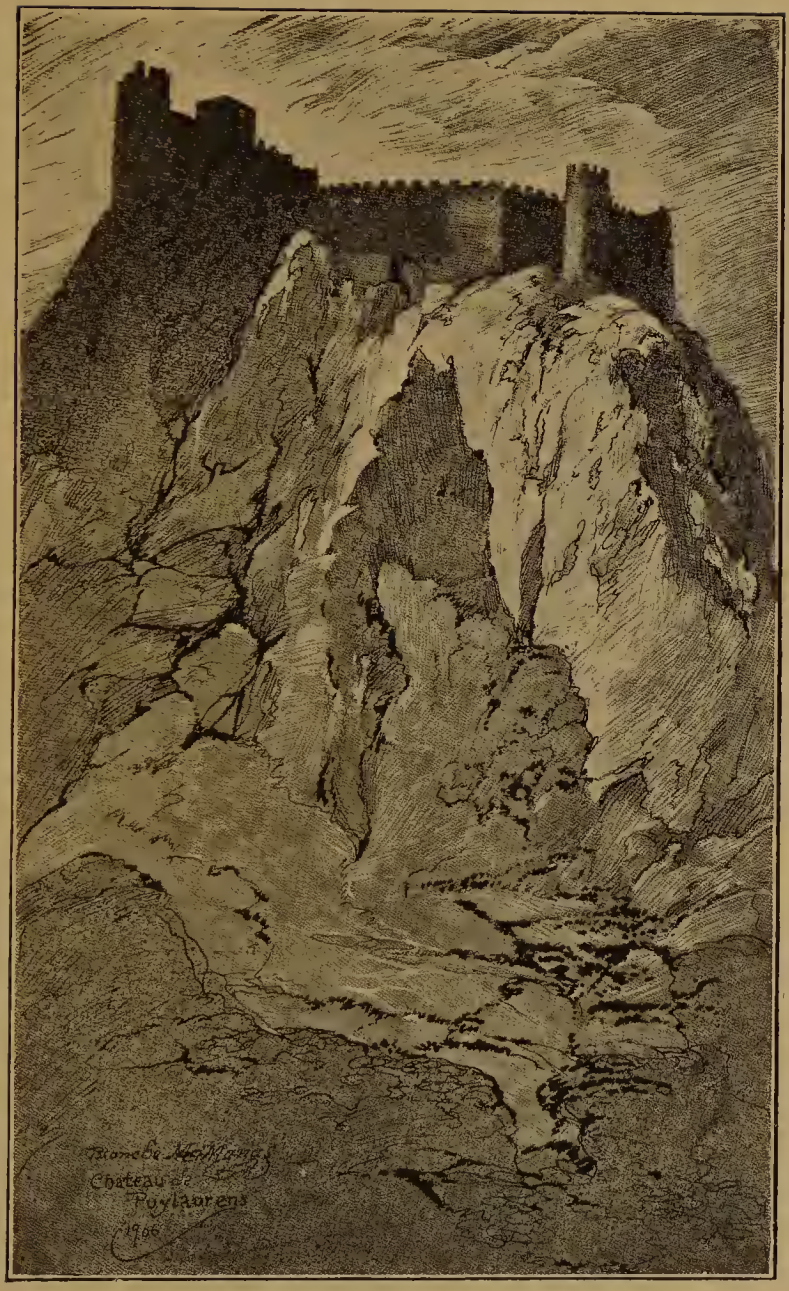
> "J'entends déjà fremir les deux mers étonnées
> De voir leurs flots unis au pied de Pyrénées."

South of Carcassonne and Limoux, just over "the mountains blue" of which the old peasant sang, is St. Hilaire, the market town of a canton of eight hundred inhabitants. It is more than that. It is a mediæval shrine of the first rank; for it is the site of an abbey founded in the fifth or sixth century. This abbey was under the direct protection of Charlemagne in 780, and he bestowed upon it "*lettres de sauvegarde,* which all were bound to respect. The monastery was secularized in 1748, but its thirteenth-century church, half Romanesque and half Gothic, will ever remain as one of the best preserved relics of its age. For some inexplicable reason its carved and cut stone is unworn by the ravages of weather, and is as fresh and sharp in its outlines as if newly cut.

Within is the tomb of St. Hilaire, the first bishop of Carcassonne. The sculpture of the tomb is of the ninth century, and it is well to know that the same thing seen in the Musée Cluny at Paris is but a reproduction. The original still remains here. The fourteenth-century cloister is a wonderful work of its kind, and this too in a region where this most artistic work abounds.

One's entrance into Quillan by road is apt to be exciting. The automobile is no novelty in these days; but to run afoul of a five kilometre procession of peasant folk with all their traps, coming and going to a market town keeps one down to a walking pace.

On the particular occasion when the author and artist passed this way, all the animals bought and sold that day at the cattle fair of Quillan seemed to be coming from the town. The little men who had them in tow were ininvariably good-natured, but everybody had a hard time in preventing horses, cows and sheep from bolting and dogs from getting run over. Finally we arrived; and a more well-appreciated haven we have never found. The town itself is quaint, picturesque and quite different from the tiny bourgs of the Pyrenees. It is in fact quite a city in miniature. Though Quillan



Château de Puylaurens

is almost a metropolis, everybody goes to bed by ten o'clock, when the lights of the cafés go out, leaving the stranger to stroll by the river and watch the moon rise over the Aude with the ever present curtain of the Pyrenees looming in the distance. It is all very peaceful and romantic, for which reason it may be presumed one comes to such a little old-world corner of Europe. And yet Quillan is a gay, live, little town, though it has not much in the way of sights to attract one. Still it is a delightful idling-place, and a good point from which to reach the château of Puylaurens out on the Perpignan road.

Puylaurens has as eerie a site as any combination of walls and roofs that one has ever seen. It perches high on a peak overlooking the valley of the Boulzane; and for seven centuries has looked down on the comings and goings of legions of men, women and children, and beasts of burden that bring up supplies to this sky-scraping height. To-day the château well deserves the name of ruin, but if it were not a ruin, and was inhabited, as it was centuries ago, no one would be content with any means of arriving at its porte-cochère but a *funiculaire* or an express elevator.

The roads about Quillan present some of the

most remarkable and stiffest grades one will find in the Pyrenees. The automobilist doesn't fear mountain roads as a usual thing. They are frequently much better graded than the sudden unexpected inclines with which one meets very often in a comparatively flat country; nevertheless there is a ten kilometre hairpin hill to climb out of Quillan on the road to Axat which will try the hauling powers of any automobile yet put on the road, and the patience of the most dawdling traveller who lingers by the way. It is the quick turns, the *lacets,* the "hairpins," that make it difficult and dangerous, whether one goes up or down; and, when it is stated that slow-moving oxen, two abreast, and often four to a cart, are met with at every turn, hauling hundred-foot logs down the mountain, the real danger may well be conceived.

Axat, the gateway to the Haute-Vallée is a dozen or more kilometres above Quillan, through the marvellous Gorges de Pierre Lys. This is a canyon which rivals description. The magnificent roadway which runs close up under the haunches of the towering rocks beside the river Aude is a work originally undertaken in the eighteenth century by the Abbé Fèlix Arnaud, Curé of St. Martin-Lys, a tiny

village which one passes en route. The Abbé Arnaud who planned to cut this remarkable bit of roadway through the Gorges du Pierre-Lys, formerly a mere trail along which only smugglers, brigands and army deserters had hitherto dared penetrate, and who to-day has the distinction of a statue in the Place at Quillan, was certainly a good engineer. It is to be presumed he was as good a churchman.

The Aude flows boldly down between two great beaks of mountains, and here, overhanging the torrent, the gentle abbé planned that a great roadway should be cut, by the frequent aid of tunnels and galleries and "corniches." And it was cut — as it was planned — in a most masterful manner. One of the rock-cut tunnels is called the "Trou du Curé," and above its portal are graven the following lines: —

> "Arrête, voyageurs! Le Maître des humains
> A fait descendre ici la force et la lumière.
> Il a dit au Pasteur: Accomplis mon dessein,
> Et le Pasteur des monts a brisé la barrière."

Surely this is a more noble monument to the Abbé Arnaud than that in marble at Quillan. The actual "Gorge" is not more than fifteen hundred metres in length, but even this impresses itself more profoundly by reason of

the great height of the rock walls on either side of the gushing river. At Saint Martin-Lys, midway between Quillan and Axat, is the church where the Abbé Arnaud served a long and useful life as the pastor of his mountain flock.

Axat, at the upper end of the Gorge, will become a mountain summer resort of the very first rank if a boom ever strikes it; but at present it is simply a delightful little, unspoiled Pyrenean town, where one eats brook trout and ortolans in the dainty little Hotel Saurel-Labat, and is lulled to sleep by the purling waters of the Aude directly beneath his windows. This quiet little town has a population of three hundred, and is blessed with an electric supply so abundant and so cheap, apparently, that the good lady who runs the all-satisfying little hotel does not think it worth while to turn off the lamps even in the daytime. This is not remarkable when one considers that the electricity is a home-made product of the power of the swift flowing Aude, which rushes by Axat's dooryards at five kilometres an hour.

Two kilometres above the town are the Gorges de St. Georges, also with a superb roadway burrowed out of the rock. Here is the

gigantic *usine-hydro-électrique* of 6,000 horse-power obtained from a three-hundred-foot fall of water. That such things could be, here in this unheard of little corner of the Pyrenees, is far from the minds of most European travellers who know only the falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen. Axat has a ruined château on the height above the town which is a wonderful ruin although it has no recorded history. To imagine its romance, however, is not a difficult procedure if you know the Pyrenees and their history. Its attractions are indeed many; but it would be a paradise for artists who did not want to go far from their inn to search their subjects. There are in addition a quaint old thirteenth-century church, a magnificently arched stone bridge, and innumerable twisting vaulted passages high aloft near the château.

Away above Axat is the plateau region known as the Capcir, thought to be the ancient bed of a mountain lake. It is closed on all sides by a great fringe of mountains, and is comparatively thickly inhabited because of its particularly good pasture lands; and has the reputation of being the coldest inhabited region in France, though it may well divide this hon-

our with the Alpine valleys of the Tarentaise in Savoie. One passes from the Capcir into the Cerdagne lying to the eastward by the Col de Casteillon.

CHAPTER IX

THE WALLS OF CARCASSONNE

Never was there an architectural glory like that of Carcassonne. Most mediæval fortified bourgs have been transformed out of all semblance to their former selves, but not so Carcassonne. It lives to-day as in the past, transformed or restored to be sure, but still the very ideal of a walled city of the Middle Ages.

The stress and cares of commerce and the super-civilization of these latter days have built up a new and ugly commercial city beyond the walls, leaving *La Cité* a lonely dull place where the very spirit of mediævalism stalks the streets and passages, and the ghosts of a past time people the château, the donjon, and the surrounding buildings which once sheltered counts and prelates and chevaliers and courtly ladies. The old cathedral, too, dedicated to St. Nazaire, as pure a Gothic gem as may be found outside Sainte Chapelle in Paris, is as much of the past as if it existed only in memory, for services are now carried on in a

great, gaunt church in the lower town, leaving this magnificent structure unpeopled and alone.

Carcassonne, as seen from the low-lying plain of the valley of the Aude, makes a most charming *motif* for a picture. In the purple background are the Pyrenees, setting off the crenelated battlements of walls, towers and donjon in genuine fairy-land fashion. It is almost too ethereal to be true, as seen through the dim mist of an early May morning. "A wonderful diadem of chiselled stone set in the forehead of the Pyrenees," an imaginative Frenchman called it. It would not be wise to attempt to improve on this metaphor.

This world's wonder — for it is a world's wonder, though not usually included in the magic seven — has enchanted author, poet, painter, historian and architect. Who indeed could help giving it the homage due, once having read Viollet-le-Duc's description in his "Dictionnaire Raisonée d'Architecture," or Nadaud's lines beginning: —

"Je n'ai jamais vu Carcassonne."

Five thousand people from all over the world pass its barbican in a year, and yet how few one recalls among his acquaintances who have ever been there.

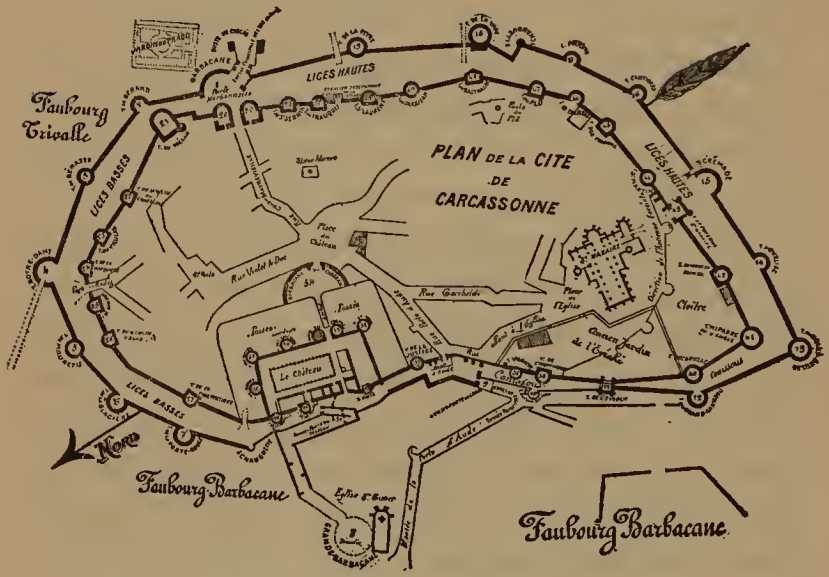
It began to dawn upon the French away back in 1835, at the instigation of Prosper Merimée, that they had within their frontiers the most wonderfully impressive walled city still above ground. It was the work of fifty years to clear its streets and ramparts of a conglomerate mass of parasite structures which had been built into the old fabric, and to reconstruct the roofings and copings of walls and houses to an approximation of what they must once have been.

Carcassonne is not very accessible to the casual tourist to southern France who thinks to laze away a dull November or January at Pau, Biarritz, or even on the Riviera. It is not in the least inaccessible, but it is not on the direct line to anywhere, unless one is en route from Bordeaux to Marseilles, or is making a Pyrenean trip. At any rate it is the best value for the money that one will get by going a couple of hundred kilometres out of his way in the whole circuit of France. By all means study the map, gentle reader, and see if you can't figure it out somehow so that you may get to Carcassonne.

Carcassonne, the present city, dates from the days of the good Saint Louis, but all interest lies with its elder sister, *La Cité,* a bouquet of

walls and towers, just across the eight-hundred-year-old bridge over the Aude.

Close to the feudal city, across the Pont-Vieux, was the barbican, a work completed under Saint Louis. It gave immediate access to the city of antiquity, and defended the approaches to the château after the manner of an outpost, which it really was. This one learns from the old plans, but the barbican itself disappeared in 1816.



Carcassonne was a most effective stronghold and guarded two great routes which passed directly through it, one the Route de Spain, and the other running from Toulouse to the Mediterranean, the same that scorching auto-

mobilists "let out" on to-day as they go from one gaming-table at Monte Carlo to another at Biarritz.

The Romans first made Carcassonne a stronghold; then, from the fifth to the eighth centuries, came the Visigoths. The Saracens held it for twenty-five years and their traces are visible to-day. After the Saracens it came to Charlemagne, and at his death to the Vicomtes de Carcassonne, independent masters of a neighbouring region, who owed allegiance to nobody. This was the commencement of the French dynasty of Trencavel, and the early years of the eleventh century saw the court of Carcassonne brilliant with troubadours, minstrels and *Cours d'Amour*. The *Cours d'Amour* of Adelaide, wife of Roger Trencavel, and niece of the king of France, were famous throughout the Midi. The followers in her train — minstrels, troubadours and lords and ladies — were many, and no one knew or heard of the fair chatelaine of Carcassonne without being attracted to her.

Simon de Montfort pillaged Carcassonne when raiding the country round about, but meanwhile the old *Cité* was growing in strength and importance, and many were the sieges it underwent which had no effect whatever on its

walls of stone. All epochs are writ large in this monument of mediævalism. Until the conquest of Roussillon, Carcassonne's fortress held its proud position as a frontier stronghold; then, during long centuries, it was all but abandoned, and the modern city grew and prospered in a matter-of-fact way, though never approaching in the least detail the architectural magnificence of its hill-top sister.

The military arts of the Middle Ages are as well exemplified at Carcassonne as can anywhere be seen out of books and engravings. The entrance is strongly protected by many twistings and turnings of walled alleys, producing a veritable maze. The Porte d'Aude is the chief entrance, and is accessible only to those on foot. Verily, the walls seem to close behind the visitor as he makes his way to the topmost height, up the narrow cobble-paved lanes. Four great gates, one within another, and four walls have to be passed before one is properly within the outer defences. To enter the *Cité* there is yet another encircling wall to be passed.

Carcassonne is practically a double fortress; the distance around the outer walls is a kilometre and a half and the inner wall is a full kilometre in circumference. Between these

The Walls of Carcassonne

fortifying ramparts unroll the narrow ribbons of roadway which a foe would find impossible to pass.

Finally, within the last line of defence, on the tiny wall-surrounded plateau, rises the old Château de Trencavel, its high coiffed towers rising into the azure sky of the Midi in most spectacular fashion. On the crest of the inner wall is a little footpath, known in warlike times as the *chemin de ronde,* punctuated by forty-eight towers. From such an unobstructed balcony a marvellous surrounding panorama unrolls itself; at one's feet lie the plain and the river; further off can be seen the mountains and sometimes the silver haze shimmering over the Mediterranean fifty miles away. Centuries of civilization are at one's hand and within one's view.

A curious tower — one of the forty-eight — spans the two outer walls. It is known as the Tour l'Évêque and possesses a very beautiful glass window. Here Viollet-le-Duc established his bureau when engaged on the reconstruction of this great work.

Almost opposite, quite on the other side of the *Cité,* is the Porte Narbonnaise, the only way by which a carriage may enter. One rises gently to the plateau, after first passing this

monumental gateway, which is flanked by two towers. Over the Porte Narbonnaise is a rude stone figure of Dame Carcas, the titular goddess of the city. Quaint and curious this figure is, but possessed of absolutely no artistic aspect. Below it are the simple words, "Sum Carcas."

The Tour Bernard, just to the right of the Porte Narbonnaise, is a mediæval curiosity. The records tell that it has served as a chicken-coop, a dog-kennel, a pigeon loft, and as the habitation of the guardian who had charge of the gate. Here in the walls of this great tower may still be seen solid stone shot firmly imbedded where they first struck. The next tower, the Tour de Benazet, was the arsenal, and the Tour Notre Dame, above the Porte de Rodez, was the scene of more than one "inquisitorial" burning of Christians.

The second line of defence and its towers is quite as curiously interesting as the first.

From within, the Porte Narbonnaise was protected in a remarkable manner, the Château Narbonnaise commanding with its own barbican and walls every foot of the way from the gate to the château proper. Besides, there were iron chains stretched across the passage, low vaulted corridors, wolf-traps (or something

very like them) set in the ground, and loop-holes in the roofs overhead for pouring down boiling oil or melted lead on the heads of any invaders who might finally have got so far as this.

The château itself, so safely ensconced within the surrounding walls of the *Cité,* follows the common feudal usage as to its construction. Its outer walls are strengthened and defended by a series of turrets, and contain within a *cour d'honneur,* the place of reunion for the armour-knights and the contestants in the Courts of Love.

On the ground floor of this dainty bit of mediævalism — which looks livable even to-day — were the seigneurial apartments, the chapel and various domestic offices. Beneath were vast stores and magazines. A smaller court-yard was at the rear, leading to the fencing-school and the kitchens, two important accessories of a feudal château which seem always to go side by side.

On the first and second floors were the lodgings of the vicomtes and their suites. The great donjon contained a circular chamber where were held great solemnities such as the signing of treaties, marriage acts and the like. To the west of the *cour d'honneur* were the

barracks of the garrison. All the paraphernalia and machinery of a great mediæval court were here perfectly disposed. Verily, no such story-telling feudal château exists as that of the Château de Narbonnais of the Trencavels in the old *Cité* of Carcassonne.

The Place du Château, immediately in front, was a general meeting-place, while a little to the left in a smaller square has always been the well of bubbling spring-water which on more than one occasion saved the dwellers within from dying of thirst.

Perhaps, as at Pompeii, there are great treasures here still buried underground, but diligent search has found nothing but a few arrowheads or spear heads, some pieces of money (money was even coined here) and a few fragments of broken copper and pottery utensils.

Finally, to sum up the opinion of one and all who have viewed Carcassonne, there is not a city in all Europe more nearly complete in ancient constructions, or in better preservation, than this old mediæval *Cité*. Centuries of history have left indelible records in stone, and they have been defiled less than in any other mediæval monument of such a magnitude.

Gustave Nadaud's lines on Carcassonne come

very near to being the finest topographical verses ever penned. Certainly there is no finer expression of truth and sentiment with regard to any architectural monument existing than the simple realism of the speech of the old peasant of Limoux: —

"'I'm sixty years; I'm getting old;
I've done hard work through all my life,
Though yet could never grasp and hold
My heart's desire through all my strife.
I know quite well that here below
All one's desires are granted none;
My wish will ne'er fulfilment know,
I never have seen Carcassonne."

. . . . . .

"'They say that all the days are there
As Sunday is throughout the week:
New dress, and robes all white and fair
Unending holidays bespeak.'

. . . . . .

"'O! God, O! God, O! pardon me,
If this my prayer should'st Thou offend!
Things still too great for us we'd see
In youth or near one's long life end.
My wife once and my son Aignan,
As far have travelled as Narbonne,
My grandson has seen Perpignan,
But I have not seen Carcassonne.'"

What emotion, what devotion these lines express, and what a picture they paint of the simple faiths and hopes of man. He never did

see Carcassonne, this old peasant of Limoux; the following lines tell why: —

> "Thus did complain once near Limoux
> A peasant hard bowed down with age.
> I said to him, 'My friend, we'll go
> Together on this pilgrimage.'
> We started with the morning tide;
> But God forgive. We'd hardly gone
> Our road half over, ere he died.
> He never did see Carcassonne."

In August, 1898, a great fête and illumination was given in the old *Cité de Carcassonne.* All the illustrious Languedoçians alive, it would seem, were there, including the *Cadets de Gascogne,* among them Armand Sylvestre, D'Esparbès, Jean Rameau, Emil Pouvillon, Benjamin Constant, Eugene Falguière, Mercier, Jean-Paul Laurens, et als.

All the artifice of the modern pyrotechnist made of the old city, at night, a reproduction of what it must have been in times of war and stress. It was the most splendid fireworks exhibition the world has seen since Nero fiddled away at burning Rome. *"La Cité Rouge,"* Sylvestre called it. *"Oh, l'impression inoubliable! Oh! le splendide tableau! It was so perfectly beautiful, so completely magnificent! I have seen the Kremlin thus illuminated; I*

have seen old Nuremberg under the same conditions, but I declare upon my honour never have I seen so beautiful a sight as the illuminations of Carcassonne."

One view of the *Cité* not often had is from the Montagne Noire, where, from its supreme height of twelve hundred metres (the Pic de Nore) there is to be seen such a bird's-eye view as was never conceived by the imagination. On the horizon are the blue peaks of the Pyrenees cutting the sky with astonishing clearness; to the eastward is the Mediterranean; and northwards are the Cevennes; while immediately below is a wide-spread plain peopled here and there with tiny villages and farms all clustering around the solid walls of Carcassonne — the *Ville* of to-day and the *Cité* of the past.

Over the blue hills, southward from Carcassonne, lies Limoux. Limoux is famous for three things, its twelfth-century church, its fifteenth-century bridge and its "*blanquette de Limoux,*" less ancient, but quite as enduring.

If one's hunger is ripe, he samples the last first, at the table d'hôte at the Hotel du Pigeon. "Blanquette de Limoux" is simply an ordinarily good white, sparkling wine, no better than Saumur, but much better than the hocks which have lately become popular in England,

and much, much better than American champagne. The town itself is charming, and the immediate environs, the peasants' cottages and the vineyards, recall those verses of Nadaud's about that old son of the soil who prayed each year that he might make the journey over the hills to Carcassonne (it is only twenty-four kilometres) and refresh his old eyes with a sight of that glorious mediæval monument.

North of Carcassonne, between the city and the peak of the Montagne Noire, is the old château of Lastours, a ruined glory of the days when only a hill-top situation and heavy walls meant safety and long life.

CHAPTER X

THE COUNTS OF FOIX

The Comté de Foix and its civilization goes back to prehistoric, Gallic and Roman times. This much we know, but what the detailed events of these periods were, we know not. Archæology alone, by means of remaining monuments in stone, must supply that which history omits. The primitives of the stone age lived mostly in caverns, but here they lived in some species of rude huts or houses. This at any rate is the supposition. With the Romans came civic importance; and fortified towns and cities sprang up here and there of which existing remains, as at St. Lizier, tell a plain story.

The principal historical events of the early years of the Middle Ages were religious in motive. Written records are few, however, and are mostly legendary accounts. Dynasties of great families began to be founded in the ninth century; and each region took on different manners and customs. The Couserans, a dismemberment of Comminges, became practically

Gascon; while Foix cast off from Toulouse, had its own development. Victor Balaguer, the poet, expresses this better than most historians when he says: *" Provence et Pyrénées, s'écrie-t-il, portent le deuil du monde latin. Le jour où tombèrent ceux de Foix tomba aussi la Provence."*

The resistance of the counts in the famous wars of the Albigeois only provoked the incursion of the troops of the cruel Simon de Montfort. The Comte de Foix fell back finally on his strong château; and, on the sixteenth of June, 1229, in the presence of the papal legate, representative of the king of France, Roger-Bernard II made his submission without reserve.

In 1272, under Comte Roger-Bernard III, the Château de Foix underwent a siege at the hands of Philippe-le-Hardi; and, at the end of three days, seeing the preponderance of numbers against him, and being doubtful of his allies, he surrendered. By marriage with Marguerite de Moncade, daughter of the Vicomte de Béarn, he inherited the two important fiefs of Catalogne and Béarn et Bigorre, thus preparing the way for possession of the throne of Navarre. By the thirteenth century the great feudal families of the Midi were dwindling in

numbers, and it was this marriage of a Comte de Foix with the heiress of Béarn which caused practically the extinction of one.

The modern department of the Ariège, of which the ancient Comté de Foix formed the chief part, possesses few historical monuments dating before the Middle Ages. There are numerous residential châteaux scattered about, and the most splendid of them all is at Foix itself. Fine old churches and monasteries, and quaint old houses are numerous; yet it is a region less exploited by tourists than any other in France.

Not all these historic shrines remain to-day unspoiled and untouched. Many of them were destroyed in the Revolution, but their sites and their ruins remain. The mountain slopes of this region are thickly strewn with watch-towers and observatories; and though all but fallen to the ground they form a series of connecting historical links which only have to be recognized to be read. The towers or châteaux of Quié, Tarascon-sur-Ariège, Gudanne, Lourdat and Vic-Dessos are almost unknown to most travellers. They deserve to become better known, however, especially Lourdat, one of the most spectacularly endowed château ruins extant.

The fourteenth century was the most brilliant in the history of Foix. These were the days of Gaston Phœbus; and the description of his reception of Charles VI of France at Mazères, as given by the chroniclers, indicates an incomparable splendour and magnificence. Gaston Phœbus, like Henri de Béarn, was what might be called a good liver. Here is how he spent his day — when he was not warring or building castles. He rose at noon and after a mass he dined. Usually there were a great number of dishes; and, on really great occasions, as on a fête or *festin,* the incredible number of two hundred and fifty. These princes of the Pyrenees loved good cheer, and their usage was to surcharge the tables and themselves with the good things until the results were uncomfortable. Gaston's two sons, Yvain and Gratain, usually stood behind him at table, and the youngest son, another Gaston, first tried all the dishes before his august father ate of them. He was weak and sickly, a "mild and melancholy figure," and no wonder! The feasting terminated, Gaston and his court would pass into the Salle de Parlement, "where many things were debated," as the chroniclers put it. Soon entered the minstrels and troubadours, while in the courts there were trials of

skill between the nobles of one house and another, stone throwing, throwing the spear, and the *jeu de paume.* The count — *" toujours magnifique "* (no chronicler of the time neglects to mention that fact) — distributed rewards to the victors. After this there was more eating, or at least more drinking.

When he was not sleeping or eating or amusing himself, or conducting such affairs as he could not well depute to another, such as the planning and building of castles, Gaston occupied himself, like many other princes of his time, with belles-lettres and poesy. He had four *secrétaires* to do his writing; and it is possible that they may have written much which is attributed to him, if the art of employing literary " ghosts " was known in that day. He composed *chansons, ballades, rondeaux* and *virelais,* and insisted on reading them aloud himself, forbidding any one to make a comment on them. How many another author would like to have the same prerogative!

Gaston Phœbus de Foix, so named because of his classic beauty, was undoubtedly a great author in his day. This bold warrior wrote a book on the manners and usage of hunting in mediæval times, entitled the *" Miroir de Phœbus; "* and, while it might not pass muster

among the masterpieces of later French literature, it was a notable work for its time and literally a mirror of contemporary men and manners in the hunting field.

Gaston de Foix was another gallant noble. He died at the age of twenty-four at the Battle of Ravenna in 1512. Jacques Fournier, who became Pope Benoit XII, also came from Foix.

The honour of being the most celebrated of the Counts of Foix may well be divided by Gaston Phœbus (1343-1390) and Henri Quatre (1553-1610). The latter was the last of the famous counts of the province; and he it was who united it with the royal domain of France, thus sinking its identity for ever, though his predecessors had done their utmost to keep its independence alive.

During the Hundred Years War the Comtes de Foix, masters of the entire middle chain of the Pyrenees, were the strongest power in the southwest; and above all were they powerful because of their alliances and relations with the Spanish princes, whose friendship and aid were greatly to be desired, for their support meant success for their allies. This is proven, absolutely, from the fact that, when the English were ultimately driven from France, it was through the aid and support of Gaston Phœbus

himself and his successors, Archambaud, Jean I and Gaston IV.

The fifteenth century saw the apogee of the house of Foix. One of its princes married Madeleine de France, sister of Louis XI. The sixteenth century saw sad times during a long civil war of more than thirty years duration. War among the members of a household or among one's own people is really an inexcusable thing. In the Comté the Abbey of Boulbonne was destroyed. At Pamiers all the religious edifices were razed; and the Abbey of St. Volusien at Foix, the special pride of the counts for ages, was destroyed by fire.

Calm came for a period under the reign of Henri IV, at Paris; but, after his death, local troubles and dissensions broke out again, inspired and instigated by the wily Duc de Rohan, which culminated at Pamiers, where the great Condé and Montmorenci appeared at the head of their troops.

The peace of Alais ended this final struggle; and, to assure the security of the country, Richelieu gave the order to dismantle all the walls and ramparts of the fortified places in the Comté, and all the châteaux-forts as well. This was done forthwith, and that is why many a mediæval château in these parts is in ruins

to-day. The Château de Foix, by reason of its dignity, was allowed to keep its towers and battlemented walls.

For a hundred and fifty years, that is up to the Revolution, Foix was comparatively tranquil. Under the reign of Louis XIV, however, the region saw the frequent passage of troops and warlike stores as they came and went to the Spanish wars. This nearly ruined many dwellers in town and country by reason of the tax they had to pay in money and provisions.

Like the Basques and the Béarnais the inhabitants of the Ariège, the descendants of the old adherents of the Comtes de Foix, bear many traces of their former independence and liberty. Civilization and their easy, comfortable manner of living have not made of them a very robust race, but they are possessed of much fairness of face and figure and gentleness of manner.

The smugglers of feudal times, and considerably later times for that matter, were the pest of the region. It was rude, hard work smuggling wines or tobacco over the mountains, in and out of Spain, and its wages were uncertain, but there were large numbers who embarked on it in preference to grazing flocks and

herds or engaging in other agricultural pursuits.

It was hard work for the smugglers of Foix to get their burdens up the mountains, but they had a custom of rolling their load up into great balls bounds around with wool and thongs and rolling them down the other side. Thus the labour was halved. The *Romany chiel* or gypsy adopted the contraband business readily; and with the competition of the French and Spanish, there were lively times on the frontier between Foix and Gascogne and Spain and Andorra.

M. Thiers recounts an adventure in an auberge of the Pyrenees with such a crew of bandits, and thought himself lucky to escape with his life.

The chief of the band, as the travellers were all sitting around the great log fire, began cleaning his pipe with a long poignard-like knife which, he volunteered, was ready to do other service than whittling bread or tobacco if need be. The night passed off safely enough by reason of the arrival of a squad of gendarmes, but the next night a whole house full of travellers were murdered on the same spot.

The roads of the old Comté de Foix, a very important thing for many who travel by auto-

mobile, are throughout excellent and extensive. There are fourteen Routes Nationales and Départementales crossing in every direction. The highway from Toulouse to Madrid runs via St. Girons and Bayonne into Andorra by way of the valley of the Ariège, and to Barcelona via Perpignan and the Col de Perthus.

The valley of the Ariège, to a large extent included in the Comté de Foix, has a better preserved historical record than its neighbours on the east and west.

In the ninth century the ruling comte was allied with the houses of Barcelona and Carcassonne. His residence was at Foix from this time up to the Revolution; and his rule embraced the valley of the Hers, of which Mirepoix was the principal place, the mountain region taken from Catalogne, and a part of the lowlands which had been under the scrutiny of the Comtes de Toulouse.

CHAPTER XI

FOIX AND ITS CHÂTEAU

Foix, of all the Préfectures of France of to-day, is the least cosmopolitan. Privas, Mende and Digne are poor, dead, dignified relics of the past; but Foix is the dullest of all, although it is a very gem of a smiling, diffident little wisp of a city, green and flowery and astonishingly picturesque. It has character, whatever it may lack in progressiveness, and the brilliant colouring is a part of all the cities of the South.

Above the swift flowing Ariège in their superb setting of mountain and forest are the towers and parapets of the old château, in itself enough to make the name and fame of any city.

Architecturally the remains of the Château de Foix do not, perhaps, rank very high, though they are undeniably imposing; and it will take a review of Froissart, and the other old chroniclers of the life and times of the magnificent Gaston Phœbus, to revive it in all its glory. A great state residence something more than a

mere feudal château, it does not at all partake of the aspect of a château-fort. It was this last fact that caused the Comtes de Foix, when, by marriage, they had also become seigneurs of Béarn, to abandon it for Mazères, or their establishments at Pau or Orthez.

Foix nevertheless remained a proud capital, first independent, then as part of the province of Navarre, then as a province of the Royaume de France; and, finally, as the Préfecture of the Département of Ariège. The population in later times has grown steadily, but never has the city approached the bishopric of Pamiers, just to the northward, in importance.

Many towns in this region have a decreasing population. The great cities like Toulouse and Bordeaux draw upon the youth of the country for domestic employment; and, lately, as chauffeurs and manicurists, and in comparison to these inducements their native towns can offer very little.

If one is to believe the tradition of antiquity the "*Rocher de Foix,*" the tiny rock plateau upon which the château sits, served as an outpost when the Phoceans built the primitive château upon the same site. Says a Renaissance historian: "On the peak of one of nature's wonders, on a rock, steep and inac-

cessible on all sides, was situated one of the most ancient fortresses of our land."

In Roman times the site still held its own as one of importance and impregnability. A representation of the château as it then was is to be seen on certain coins of the period. This establishes its existence as previous to the coming of the Visigoths in the beginning of the sixth century. The first written records of the Château de Foix date from the chronicles of 1002, when Roger-le-Vieux, Comte de Carcassonne, left to his heir, Bernard-Roger, "*La Terre et le Château de Foix.*"

The Château de Foix owes its reputation to its astonishingly theatrical site as much as to the historic memories which it evokes, though it is with good right that it claims a legendary renown among the feudal monuments of the Pyrenees. All roads leading to Foix give a long vista of its towered and crenelated château sitting proudly on its own little *monticule* of rock beside the Ariège. Its history begins with that of the first Comtes de Foix, the first charter making mention thereof being the last will and testament of Roger-Bernard, the first count, who died in 1002.

During the wars against the Albigeois the château was attacked by Simon de Montfort

three times, in 1210, 1212, 1213, but always in vain. Though the surrounding faubourgs were pillaged and burned the château itself did not succumb. It did not even take fire, for its rocky base gave no hold to the flames which burned so fiercely around it.

The most important event of the château's history happened in 1272 when the Comte Roger-Bernard III rebelled against the authority of the Seneschal-Royal of Toulouse. To punish so rebellious a vassal, Philippe-le-Hardi came forthwith to Foix at the head of an army, and himself undertook the siege of the château. At the end of three days the count succumbed, with the saying on his lips that it was useless to cut great stones and build them up into fortresses only to have them razed by the first besiegers that came along. Whatever the qualifications of the third Roger-Bernard were, consistent perseverance was not one of them.

Just previous to 1215, after a series of intrigues with the church authorities, the château became a dependence of the Pope of Rome; but at a council of the Lateran the Comte Raymond-Roger demanded the justice that was his, and the new Pope Honorius III made over the edifice to its rightful proprietor.

During the wars of religion the château was

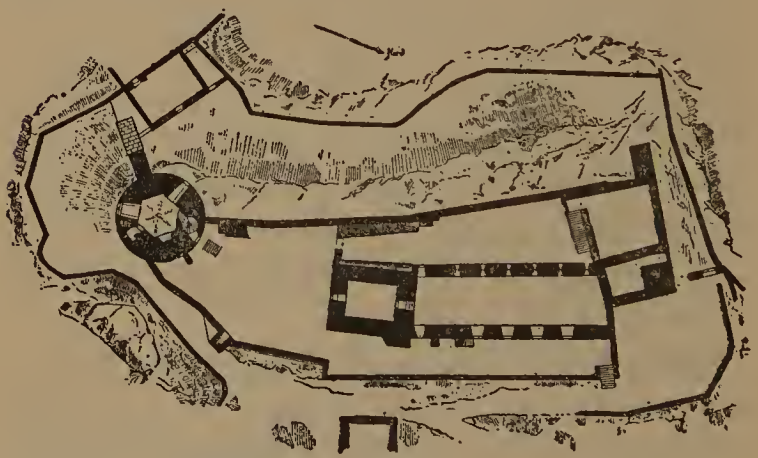
the storm-centre of great military operations, of which the town itself became the unwilling victim. In 1561 the Huguenots became masters of the city.

Under Louis XIII it was proposed to raze the château, as was being done with others in the Midi, but the intervening appeal of the governor saved its romantic walls to posterity. In the reign of Louis XIV the towers of the château were used as archives, a prison and a military barracks, and since the Revolution — for a part of the time at least — it has served as a house of detention. When the tragic events of the Reformation set all the Midi ablaze, and Richelieu and his followers demolished most of the châteaux and fortresses of the region, Foix was exempted by special orders of the Cardinal-Minister himself.

Another war cloud sprang up on the horizon in 1814, by reason of the fear of a Spanish invasion; and it was not a bogey either, for in 1811 and 1812 the Spaniards had already penetrated, by a quickly planned raid, into the high valley of the Ariège.

In 1825 civil administration robbed this fine old example of mediæval architecture of many of those features usually exploited by antiquarians. To increase its capacity for shelter-

ing criminal prisoners, barracks and additions — mere shacks many of them — were built; and the original outlines were lost in a maze of meaningless roof-tops. Finally, a quarter of a century later, the rubbish was cleared away; and, before the end of the century, restoration of the true and faithful kind had made of this noble mediæval monument a vivid reminder of its past feudal glory quite in keeping with its history.



Ground Plan of the Château de Foix

The actual age of the monument covers many epochs. The two square towers and the main edifice, as seen to-day, are anterior to the thirteenth century, as is proved by the design in the seals of the Comtes de Foix of 1215 and 1241 now in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris.

Blanche McManus
1906
Foix

In the fourteenth century these towers were strengthened and enlarged with the idea of making them more effective for defence and habitation.

The escutcheons of Foix, Béarn and Comminges, to be seen in the great central tower, indicate that it, too, goes back at least to the end of the fourteenth century, when Eleanore de Comminges, the mother of Gaston Phœbus, ruled the Comté.

Key of the Vaulting, Château de Foix, Showing the Arms of the Comtes de Foix

The donjon or *Tour Ronde* arises on the west to a height of forty-two metres; and will be remarked by all familiar with these sermons in stone scattered all over France as one of the most graceful. Legend attributes it to Gaston Phœbus; but all authorities do not agree as to this. The window and door openings, the mouldings, the accolade over the entrance doorway and the machicoulis all denote that they belong to the latter half of the fifteenth century. These, however, may be later interpolations.

Originally one entered the château from exactly the opposite side from that used to-day. The slope leading up to the rock and swinging around in front of the town is an addition of recent years. Formerly the plateau was gained by a rugged path which finally entered the precincts of the fortress through a rectangular barbican.

Finally, to sum it up, the pleasant, smiling, trim little city of Foix, and its château rising romantically above it, form a delightful prospect. Well preserved, well protected, and for ever free from further desecration, the Château de Foix is as nobly impressive and glorious a monument of the Middle Ages as may be found

in France, as well as chief record of the gallant days of the Comtes de Foix.

Foix' Palais de Justice, built back to back with the rock foundations of the château, is itself a singular piece of architecture containing a small collection of local antiquities. This old Maison des Gouverneurs, now the Palais de Justice, is a banal, unlovely thing, regardless of its high-sounding titles.

In the Bibliothèque, in the Hôtel de Ville, there are eight manuscripts in folio, dating from the fifteenth century, and coming from the Cathedral of Mirepoix. They are exquisitely illuminated with miniatures and initials after the manner of the best work of the time.

It was that great hunter and warrior, Gaston Phœbus who gave the Château de Foix its greatest lustre.

It was here that this most brilliant and most celebrated of the counts passed his youth; and it was from here that he set out on his famous expedition to aid his brother knights of the Teutonic Order in Prussia. At Gaston's orders the Comte d'Armagnac was imprisoned here, to be released after the payment of a heavy ransom. As to the motive for this particular act authorities differ as to whether it was the fortunes of war or mere brigandage.

They lived high, the nobles of the old days, and Froissart recounts a banquet at which he had assisted at Foix, in the sixteenth century, as follows: —

"And this was what I saw in the Comté de Foix: The Count left his chamber to sup at midnight, the way to the great salle being led by twelve varlets, bearing twelve illumined torches. The great hall was crowded with knights and equerries, and those who would supped, saying nothing meanwhile. Mostly game seemed to be the favourite viand, and the legs and wings only of fowl were eaten. Music and chants were the invariable accompaniment, and the company remained at table until after two in the morning. Little or nothing was drunk."

Froissart's description of the table is simple enough, but he develops into melodrama when he describes how the count killed his own son on the same night — a tragic ending indeed to a brilliant banquet. "'Ha! traitor,' the Comtė said in the *patois,* as he entered his sleeping son's chamber; 'why do you not sup with us? He is surely a traitor who will not join at table.' And with a swift, but gentle drawing of his *coutel* (knife) across his successor's throat he calmly went back to supper."

Truly, there were high doings when knights were bold and barons held their sway. They could combat successfully everything but treachery; but the mere suspicion of that prompted them to take time by the forelock and become traitors themselves.

Foix has a fête on the eighth and ninth of September each year, which is the delight of all the people of the country round about. Its chief centre is the Allées de Vilote, a great tree-shaded promenade at the base of the château. It is brilliantly lively in the daytime, and fairy-like at night, with its trees all hung with great globes of light.

A grand ball is the chief event, and the "Quadrille Officiel" is opened with the maire and the préfet at the head. After this comes *la fête générale,* when the happy southrons know no limit to their gaieties. There are three great shaded promenades, and in each is a ball with its attendant music. It is a pandemonium; and one has to be habituated to distinguish the notes of one blaring band from the others. The central park is reserved for the country folk, that on the left for the town folk, and that on the right for the nobility. This, at any rate, was the disposition in times past, and some sort of distinction is still made.

In suburban Foix, out on the road to Pamiers, is the little village of St. Jean-de-Vergues. It has a history, of course, but not much else. It is a mere spot on the map, a mere cluster of houses on the *Grande Route* and nothing more. In the days of the Comte Roger-Bernard, however, when he would treat with the king of France, and showed his willingness to become a vassal, its inhabitants held out beyond all others for an "*indépendance comtale.*" They didn't get it, to be sure, but with the arrival of Henri Quatre on the throne of France, the vassalage became more friendly than enforced.

CHAPTER XII

THE VALLEY OF THE ARIÈGE

The entire valley of the Ariège, from the Val d'Andorre until it empties into the Garonne at Toulouse, contains as many historic and romantic reminders as that of any river of the same length in France.

Saverdun and Mazères, between Toulouse and Pamiers, and perhaps fifty kilometres north of Foix, must be omitted from no historical trip in these parts. Saverdun sits close beside one of the few remaining columns which formerly marked the boundary between Languedoc and Gascogne, a veritable historical guide-post. It was one of the former fortified towns of the Comté de Foix. It is an unimportant and unattractive enough place to-day, if a little country town of France can ever be called unattractive, but it is the head centre of innumerable châteaux and country houses of other days hidden away on the banks of the Ariège. Mostly they are without a traceable history, but everything points to the fact that

they played an important part in the golden days of chivalry, and such names as l'Avocat-Vieux, Frayras, Larlenque, Madron, Pauliac and Le Vigne — the oldtime manor of the family of Mauvasin — will suggest much to any who know well their mediæval history.

A diligence runs to-day from Saverdun to Mazères, the birthplace of the gorgeous and gallant Gaston of Foix, the hero of Ravenna. Mazères is a most ancient little town, built on the banks of a small river, the Hers, and in the thirteenth century was surrounded by important fortifications, now mostly gone to build up modern garden walls. Around the old ramparts has been laid out a series of encircling boulevards, which, as an expression of civic improvement, is far and away ahead of the squares and circles of new western towns in America. The encircling boulevard is one, if not the chief, charm of very many French towns.

The ruins of the ancient château where was born the celebrated Gaston are still seen, but nothing habitable is left to suggest the luxury amid which the youth was brought up. Near by are the châteaux of Nogarède and Nassaure, each of them reminiscent of family names writ large in the history of Foix.

Another dozen kilometres southward towards Foix is Pamiers. It is extremely probable that provincial France has changed its manners considerably since the Revolution, but one can hardly believe of Pamiers, to-day a delightful little valley town, all green and red and brown, that a traveller with a jaundiced eye once called it "an ugly, stinking, ill-built hole with an inn — *of sorts.*" This is not the aspect of the city, nor does it describe the Hôtel Catala.

Pamiers owes its origin to the erection of a feudal château by Comte Roger II on his return from the Holy Land, and which he called *Apamea* or *Apamia,* in memory of his visit to *Apamée* in Syria. Evolution has readily transformed the name into Pamiers. Virtually, so far as its lands went, the place belonged to a neighbouring abbey, but as the monks were forced to call upon the Comtes de Foix to aid them in protecting their property from the Comtes de Carcassonne, the title rights soon passed to the ruling house of Foix. In 1628 Condé pillaged and sacked the city, and not a vestige now remains of its once proud château, save such portions as may have been built into and hidden in other structures. The site of the old château is preserved in the memory only by the name of Castellat, which has been given

to a singularly beautiful little park and promenade.

It was in the thirteenth century that a Bishop of Pamiers, the legate of Pope Boniface VIII, insulted Philippe-le-Bel in full audience of his parlément. The king, resentful, drove him from the council, and a Bull of Pope Boniface delivered the bishop to an ecclesiastical tribunal. So far, so good, but Boniface issued another Bull demanding that the king of France submit to papal power in matters temporal as well as in matters spiritual. Thus a pretty quarrel ensued, beginning with the famous letter from the king, which opened thus: "Philippe, by the grace of God, King of the French, to Boniface, the pretended Pope, has little or no reason for homage. . . ."

Pamiers itself is a dull little provincial cathedral town, lying low in a circle of surrounding hills. Its churches are historically famous, and architecturally varied and beautiful, and the octagonal belfry of its cathedral (1512), in the style known as "*Gothic-Toulousain,*" is particularly admirable.

Mirepoix, a dozen kilometres east of Pamiers, is interesting. The Seigneurie of Mirepoix became an appanage of Guy de Levis, maréchal in the army of Simon de Montfort

in the thirteenth century, but the legislators of Revolutionary times, disregarding the usage of five centuries, coupled the control of the affairs of the règion with those of Foix, from which it had indeed been separated long ages before.

Mirepoix has, nevertheless, an individuality and a history quite its own. In 1317 it was made a bishopric, and was under the immediate control of the Seneschalship of Carcassonne. It had, by parent right, a certain attachment for Foix, but by the popular consent of its people none at all; thus it lay practically under the sheltering wing of Languedoc.

The descendants of Guy de Levis were distinguished in the army, in diplomacy and held many public offices of trust at Paris. Under Louis XV the last representative of the family was made a "Duc, Maréchal de France et Gouverneur de Languedoc." It was his cousin, François de Levis-Ajac (from whom Levis opposite Quebec got its name), who became also Maréchal de France, and illustrious by reason of his defence of Canada.

The Château de Montségur, in the valley of the Hers, was the scene of the last stand of the Albigeois tracked to their death by the inquisitors.

Just westward of Foix is La Bastide-de-Serou, founded in 1254, another of those ancient bastides with which this part of the Midi was covered in mediæval times. To-day it is a mere nothing on the map, and not much more in reality, a dull, sad town, whose only liveliness comes from the exploitations of a company whose business it is to dig phosphate and bauxite from the hillsides round about.

Below La Bastide is the Château de Bourdette, charmingly set about with vines in a genuine pastoral fashion. For a neighbour, not far away, there is also the Château de Rodes, set in the midst of a forest of mountain ash and quite isolated. Either, if they are ever put on the market (for they are inhabitable to-day), would make a good retiring spot for one who wanted to escape the strenuous cares and hurly-burly of city life.

South of Foix is Tarascon-sur-Ariège, a name which has a familiar sound to lovers of fiction and readers of Daudet. It was not at Tarascon-sur-Ariège where lived Daudet's estimable bachelor, Tartarin, but Tarascon-sur-Rhône in Provence. Daudet pulled the latter smug little town from obscurity and oblivion — even though the inhabitants said that he had slandered them — but nothing has happened

Tarascon-sur-Ariège

that gives distinction to the Tarascon of the Pyrenees since the days when its seigneurs inhabited its château.

Reminders of the town's mediæval importance are few indeed, and of its château only a lone round tower remains. There are two fortified gateways in the town still above ground, and two thirteenth-century church towers which take rank as admirable mediæval monuments.

Tarascon was one of the four principal fortified towns of the Comté de Foix, but suffered by fire, and for ever since has languished and dozed its days away, so that not even a passing automobile will wake its dwellers from their somnolence. Tarascon has a fine and picturesque bridge over the Ariège which intrudes itself in the foreground from almost every view-point. It is not old, however, but the work of the last century.

Here nearly everything is of the mouldy past and rusty with age and tradition, though there is a local iron industry something considerable in extent.

The highroad from Foix into Andorra cuts the town directly in halves, and on either side are narrow, climbing streets running up the hillside from the river bank, but architectural or topographical changes have been few since

the olden times. Tarascon's population — though the place is the market town of the commune — has, in a hundred years, fallen from fifteen hundred to fourteen hundred and forty five, to give exact statistical figures, which are supposed not to lie. Such observations in France really prove nothing, not even that signs of progress are wanting, nor that folk are less prosperous; they simply suggest that its cities and towns are self-satisfied and content, and are not ambitious to outdistance their neighbours in alleged civic improvements of doubtful taste — always at the tax-payers' expense.

Tarascon of itself might well be omitted from a Pyrenean itinerary, but when one includes the neighbouring church of Notre Dame de Sabart — a place of pilgrimage for the faithful of the whole region of the Pyrenees on the eighth and fifteenth of September — the case were different. It is one of the sights and shrines of the region, as is that of Stes. Maries-de-la-Mer in Provence, or Notre Dame de Laghat in the old Comté de Nice.

The old abbey-fortress built here by Charlemagne has disappeared, but the great Romanesque church, with its three great naves, is avowedly built up from the remains of the

former edifice. Most of Charlemagne's handiwork has vanished throughout his kingdom, but the foundations remain, here and there, and upon them has been built all that is best and most enduring in Gaul.

In the environs it was planned to make a great centre of affairs, but destiny and the Comtes de Foix ruled otherwise, though, curiously enough, up to the Revolution the "*Prêtres de Sabart*" ruled with an iron-bound supremacy many of the affairs of neighbouring parishes which were no business of theirs. It was church and state again in conflict, but the Revolution finished that for the time being.

Like many of the *pardons* of Brittany, or the fête of Les Saintes Maries in Provence, the fête of Notre Dame de Sabart commences as a religious function, but degenerates finally into a *Fête Profane,* with dancing, bull-baiting, and eating and drinking to the full. It is perhaps not a wholly immoral aspect that the fête takes on; certainly the participants do not act in any manner outrageous; but by contrast the thing is bound to be remarked by westerners, and probably misjudged and set down as something worse than it is. Bull-baiting, for instance, sounds bad, but when one learns that it consists only of trying to snatch a ribbon

rosette from between the bull's horns — for a prize of three francs for a blue one, and five francs for a red one, the bull carrying the red rosette being, supposedly, more vicious and savage than the others — the whole thing resolves itself into a simple, harmless amusement, far more dangerous for the amateur rosette picker than the bull, who really seems to enjoy it.

Vic Dessos, just southwest of Tarascon, is a quaint little mountain town, with the ruins of the Château de Montréal and a twelfth-century church as attractions for the traveller. The savage surroundings of Vic, the denuded mountain peaks, and the deep valleys, bring tempests and thunderstorms in their train with astonishing violence and frequency. The clouds roll down like a pall, suddenly, at any time of the year, and as quickly pass away again. The phenomena have been remarked by many travellers in times past, and one need not fear missing it if he stays anything over three hours within a fifty-kilometre radius. If this offers anything of a sensation to one, Vic Dessos should be visited. You can arrive by diligence from Tarascon, and can get comfortably in out of the rain at the excellent Hôtel Benazet.

From Tarascon to Ax-les-Thermes, still in

the valley of the Ariège, is twenty-five kilometres of superb roadway. All the way are strung out groups of dainty villages surrounded with cultivated country. Here and there is an isolated mass of rock, a round watch-tower, or a ruined fortress, still possessing its crenelated walls to give an attitude of picturesqueness. There are innumerable little villages, a whole battery of them, linked together. At the end of this long peopled highway is an unpretentious mediæval country house, of that class known as a *gentilhommière,* of fawn-coloured stone, and still possessing its two flanking sentinel towers preserved in all the romantic grimness of their youth.

At the junction of the Ariège with the Ascou, the Oriège, the Lauze and the Foins is Ax-les-Thermes — the ancient *Aquæ* of the Romans, and now a " thermal station " of the first rank. Primarily Ax is noted for its sulphurous waters, but for the lover of romantic days and ways its architectural and historical monuments are of the first consideration. The ruins of the Château des Maures, the ancient *Castel Maü,* are the chief of these monuments, while a neighbouring peak of rock bears aloft an enormous square tower surmounted by a statue of the Virgin.

There are sixty-one "sources" at Ax-les-Thermes giving a supply of medicinal waters. In part they were known to the Romans, and in 1260 Saint Louis founded a hospital here for sick soldiers returning from the Crusades.

Ax-les-Thermes is not a howlingly popular watering place, but it is far more delightful than Luchon, Cauterets or Bigorre, if quaintness of architecture, manners and customs, and modesty of hotel prices count for anything.

The Porte et Pont d'Espagne at Ax is one of the most interesting architectural reminders of the past that one will find throughout the Pyrenees. The bridge itself is but a diminutive span carrying a narrow roadway, which if not forbidden to automobile traffic should be, for the negotiating of this bridge and road, and the low, arched gateway at the end, will come very near to spelling disaster for any who undertakes it.

Throughout the neighbourhood one sees more than an occasional yawning pit's mouth. All through the Comté de Foix were exploited, and are yet to some extent, iron mines and forges, the latter known as *Forges Catalans*. Roger-Bernard, Comte de Foix, in 1293 gave the first charter to the mine-promotors of the neighbourhood, and the industry flourished in many

parts of the Comté until within a few generations, when, apparently, the supply of mineral was becoming exhausted.

At Luzenac, on the line between Tarascon and Ax, one turns off the road and in a couple of hours, if he is a good brisk walker, makes the excursion to the *château-à-pic* of Lourdat. There is a little village of the same name at the base of the rocky peak which holds aloft the château, but that doesn't count.

Without question this Château de Lourdat ranks as one of the most spectacular of all the Pyrenean châteaux. Its rank in history, too, is quite in keeping with its extraordinary situation, though nothing very startling ever happened within its walls. It dates from the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, and outside that of the capital of Foix was the most efficient stronghold the counts possessed. Louis XIII demolished the edifice, in part, fearing its powers of resistance, and as a base from which some new project might be launched against him. Accordingly, it is a ruin to-day, but in spite of this there are still left four pronounced lines of fortifications before one comes to the inner precincts of the château. For this reason alone it ranks as one of the most strongly defended of all contemporary feudal works. Even

the old *Cité de Carcassonne* has but two encircling walls.

The square donjon rising in the middle is in the best style of that magnificent royal builder, Gaston Phœbus, and is reminiscent of the works of Foulques Nerra in mid-France. There is also a great ogive-arched portal, or gateway, which made still another defence to be scaled before one finally entered within.

In situation and general spectacular effect the Château de Lourdat takes a very near rank to that rock-perched château at Le Puy — "the most picturesque spot in the world."

Château de Lourdat

CHAPTER XIII

ST. LIZIER AND THE COUSERANS

Le Pays de Couserans lies in the valley of the Salat, in the mid-Pyrenees, hemmed in by Foix, Comminges and Spain. Its name is derived from the Euskarans, an Iberian tribe who were here on the spot in the dark ages.

The history of the Couserans is not known to anything like the extent of its neighbouring states, and is, accordingly, very little travelled by strangers from afar, save long-bearded antiquarians who come to study St. Lizier, and regret that they were not obliged to come on donkey-back as of old, instead of by rail or automobile. The trouble with antiquarianism, as a profession, or a passion, is that it leads one to fall into a sleepy unprogressiveness which comports little with the modern means at hand for doing things. A photographic plate of a curious Roman inscription is far more truthful and convincing than the most painstaking Ruskinese pencil drawing ever limned, and a good "process-

cut '' of the broad strokes of some facile modern artist's brush is more typical of the characteristics of a landscape than the finest wood or steel engraving our grandfathers ever knew.

If you like grand mountains, here in Couserans is Mont Vallier, a superb giant of the central chain of the Pyrenees. If it is sweet sloping valleys that you prefer, here they are in all their unspoiled wildness, for the railway actually does stop at St. Girons. If an ice-cold mountain stream would please your fancy, there is the Salat and its tributaries, flowing down by St. Girons and St. Lizier into the Garonne. And, finally, if you wish to roll back the curtain of time you will see in old St. Lizier a stage set with the accessories the reminiscent splendours of which will be scarcely equalled by any other feudal bourg of France.

There is no region in the Pyrenees of which less is known historically than the Valley of the Salat. A vicomte reigned here in the sixteenth century, but the seigneury was divided among different branches of the family soon after; and, if they had an archivist among them, he failed to preserve his documents along with the written history of the greater affairs of Toulouse and Foix. Soon religious and civil troubles began to press and much of Couserans

gave allegiance to neighbouring feudalities, with the result that from the times of Henri IV to those of the Revolution, not an historical event of note has been chronicled.

As one approaches St. Girons, the metropolis of the Couserans, by road from Foix, he passes through the Grotto of the Mas d'Azil, a great underground cave, through which runs a splendid carriage road. It is a work unique among the masterpieces of the road builders of France. This subterranean roadway has, perhaps, a length of half a kilometre and a width of from ten to thirty metres. It is not a stupendous work nor an artistic one, but a most curious one. This Grotte de Mas d'Azil with its great domed gallery can only be likened to a Byzantine cupola. This much is natural; but a roadway beneath this noble roof and a parapet alongside are the work of man.

It gave shelter to two thousand persons under its damp vault during the wars of religion, in 1625, when the neighbouring Calvinists here defended themselves successfully against the Catholic army of invaders. The cavern was practically a fortress, then, and an old atlas of the time shows its precise position as being directly behind a little fortified or walled town, the same which exists to-day. The roadway

on this old map was marked, as now on the maps of the État-Major, as running directly through the "Roch du Mas," and an engraved foot-note to the plate states that the "*rivière passe dessoubs ceste montagne.*"

When Richelieu triumphed against the Protestants he razed the fortifications of Mas d'Azil, as he did others elsewhere. The little town is really delightfully disposed to-day, and has a quaint, old domed church and a fine shaded promenade which would make an admirable stage-setting for a mediæval costume play.

At Montjoie, on the road to Foix, is a curious relic of the past. In the fourteenth century it was a famous walled town of considerable pretensions; but, to-day, a population of a hundred find it hard work to earn a livelihood. The square, battlemented walls of the little bourg are still in evidence, flanked with four tourelles at the corners and pierced with two gates. Architecturally it is a mélange of Romanesque and Gothic.

Castelnau-Durban lies midway between St. Girons and Foix, and possesses still, with some semblance to its former magnificence though it be a ruin, an old thirteenth-century château. At Rimont, near by, is an ancient *bastide royale,* a sort of kingly rest-house or hunting lodge

of olden days. The *bastide* and the *cabanon* are varieties of small country-houses, one or the other of which may be found scattered everywhere through the south of France, from the Pyrenees to the Alps. They are low-built, square, red-tiled, little houses, a sort of abbreviated Italian villa, though their architecture is more Spanish than Italian. They are the punctuating notes of every southern French landscape.

One cannot improve on an unknown French poet's description of the *bastide:*—

"Monuments fastueux d'orgueil ou de puissance,
Hôtels, palais, châteaux, votre magnificence
N'éblouit pas mes yeux, n'inspire pas mes chants.
Je ne veux célébrer que la maison des champs,
La riante bastide . . ."

St. Girons has a particularly advantageous and attractive site at the junction of two rivers, the Lez and the Salat, and of four great transversal roadways. The traffic with the Spanish Pyrenean provinces has always been very great, particularly in cattle, as St. Girons is the nearest large town in France to the Spanish frontier.

A century ago a traveller described St. Girons as a "dull crumbling town," but he died

too soon, this none too acute observer. It was near-by St. Lizier that had begun to crumble, while St. Girons itself was already prospering anew. To-day it has arrived. Its definitive position has been established. Its affairs augment continually; and it is one of the few towns in these parts which has added fifty per cent to its population in the last fifty years.

St. Girons is without any remarkably interesting monuments, though the town is delightfully situated and laid out and there is real character and picturesqueness in its tree-lined promenade along the banks of the Salat. Originally St. Girons was known as Bourg-sous-Ville, being but a dependency of St. Lizier. To-day the state of things is exactly reversed. In the twelfth century it came to have a name of its own, after that of the Apostle Geronius. In the Quartier Villefranche, at St. Girons, on the left bank of the Salat, is the Palais de Justice, once the old château of the seigneurs, which architecturally ranks second to the old Église de St. Vallier with its great Romanesque doorway and its crenelated tower like that of a donjon.

St. Lizier, just out of St. Girons on the St. Gauden's road, is one of the mediæval glories which exist to-day only in their historic past.

St. Lizier

Its château, its cathedral and its old stone bridge are unfortunately so weather-worn as to be all but crumbled away; but they still point plainly to the magnificent record that once was theirs. Once St. Lizier was the principal city of Couserans, a region which included all that country lying between the basins of the Ariège and the Garonne. In Roman days it was an important strategic point and bore the imposing name of *Lugdunum Consoranorum.* Later it became a bishopric and preserved all its prerogatives up to the Revolution.

The cloister of the twelfth and fourteenth-century cathedral has been classed as one of those *Monuments Historiques* over which the French Minister of Beaux Arts has a loving care. The château of other days was used also as an episcopal palace, but has undergone today the desecration of serving as a madhouse.

At each step, as one strolls through St. Lizier, he comes upon relics of the past, posterior even to the coming of Christianity. On the height of the hill were four pagan temples, one each to the honour of Minerva, Mars, Jupiter and Janus. Only a simple souvenir of the latter remains to complete the story of their former existence as set forth in the chronicles. There is a two-visaged "Janus-head," discov-

ered in 1771, which is now in the old cathedral.

To the north of St. Lizier, a dozen kilometres or so, is the Château de Noailhan, dating from the fifteenth century, which is admirable from an architectural point of view.

Above St. Girons, in the valley of the Salat, is the quaint little city of Seix. It is delightful because it has not been exploited; and if you do not mind a twenty-kilometre diligence ride from St. Girons, if travelling by rail, it will give you a practical demonstration of a "rest-cure." The ruins of the Châteaux de Mirabel and La Garde, close to the Pont de la Saule, recall the fact that Charlemagne confided the guarding of these upper valleys of the Couserans to the inhabitants of Seix, and gave it the dignity of being called a "*Ville Royale.*"

In the Vallée d'Ustou one may see a real novelty in industry which the mountaineers have developed, and a monopoly at that. Think of that, ye who talk of the uncommercialism of effete Europe!

It is the trade in dancing bears which the *montagnards* of Ustou control. Not great, overbearing, ugly, unwholesome-looking animals like grizzlies, nor sleek pale polar bears, but spicy-looking, cinnamon-coloured little

Trained Bears of the Vallée d'Ustou

bears, as gentle apparently as a shaggy Newfoundland, and frequently not much bigger. When one does grow out of his class, and rises head and shoulders above his fellows as he stands on his hind legs, he is a moth-eaten, crotchety specimen whose only usefulness is as a "come-on," or a preceptor, for the younger ones.

There's nothing difficult about teaching a bear to dance. At least one so judges from watching the process here; but one needs patience, a will, and must not know fear, for even a dancing bear has wicked teeth and claws; and, his strength, if dormant, is dangerous if he once suspects he is master and not slave. Above all the teeth are a great and valuable asset to a dancing bear. A bear who simply struts around and holds his muzzle in air is put in the very rear row of the chorus and called a *sal cochon,* but one who grins and shows his teeth has possibilities in his profession that the other will never dream of. The bears of the country fairs of France are all descended from the best families of Ustou; and, whatever their lack of grace may be in the dance, certainly "*personne est plus amoureux dans la société.*"

All through Couserans, particularly along

the river valleys, are piquant little villages and smiling peasant folk, ever willing to pass the time of day with the stranger, or discuss the good old days before the railroad came to St. Girons, and when St. Lizier was looked upon as being a possible religious capital of the world.

In the high valleys, above St. Girons, in Bethmale in particular, one finds still a reminiscence of the past in the picturesque costumes of the peasants not yet fallen before the advance of Paris modes. The men wear short red or blue breeches, embroidered with arabesques down the sides, and, on fête-days, a big broad-brimmed hat, and a vest of embroidered velours, with great turned-up sabots, something like those of the Ariège.

The women have a sort of red bonnet coiffe, held tight around the head by a kind of diadem of ribbon, and a great white-winged cap tumbling to the shoulders. The skirt is short with very many pleats, and there is also the traditional sabot. This is the best description the author, a mere man, can give.

High up in this same valley is the little village of Biert, once the civil capital of the region, as was St. Lizier the religious capital.

To-day there are between three and four thousand people here. Just above is the Col de Port, 1,249 metres high, leading into the watershed of the Ariège and the Comté de Foix.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PAYS DE COMMINGES

On the first steep slope of the Pyrenees, bounded on one side by Couserans and on the other by Bigorre, is the ancient Comté de Comminges, the territory of the Convènes, whose capital was *Lugdunum Convenarum,* established by Pompey from the remains left by the legions of Sertorius. Under the Roman emperors the capital became an opulent city, but to-day, known as St. Bertrand de Comminges, but seven hundred people think enough of it to call it home.

It possesses a historic and picturesque site unequalled in the region, but Luchon, Montrejeau and St. Gaudens have grown at the expense of the smaller town, and its grand old cathedral church and ancient ramparts are little desecrated by alien strangers.

The view of Comminges from a distance is uncommon and startling. One may see across a valley the outline of every rock and tree and housetop of the little town clustered about the

knees of the swart, sturdy church of St. Bertrand of Comminges, one of the architectural glories of the mediæval builder. The mountains rise roundly all about and give a rough frame to an exquisite picture.

What the precise date of the foundation of Comminges may be no one seems to know, though St. Jerome has said that it was a city built first by the *montagnards* in 79 B. C. This sacred chronicler called the founders "*brigands,*" but authorities agree that he meant merely mountain dwellers.

There is a profuse history of all this region still existing in the archives of the Département, which ranks among the most important of all those of feudal times still preserved in France. Only those of the Seine (Paris), Normandy (Rouen) and Provence (Marseilles and Aix) surpass it.

In autumn St. Bertrand de Comminges is an enchanted spot, with all the colours of the rainbow showing in its ensemble. It is grandly superb, the panorama which unrolls from the terrace of the old château, succeeding ranges of the Pyrenees rising one behind the other, cloud or snow-capped in turn. St Bertrand, the ancient bishop's seat of Comminges, with the fortress walls surrounding the town and

towering cathedral is, in a way, a suggestion of St. Michel's Mount off the Normandy coast, except there is no neighbouring sea. It is a townlet on a pinnacle.

The constructive elements of the grim ramparts are Roman, but mediæval additions and copings have been interpolated from time to time so that they scarcely look their age. In the *Ville Haute* were built the cathedral and its dependencies, the château of the seigneurs, and the houses of the noblesse. Beyond these, but within another encircling wall, were the houses of the adherents of the counts; while outside of this wall lived the mere hangers-on. This was the usual feudal disposition of things. Eighty thousand people once made up the population of St. Bertrand. And three great highways, to Agen, to Dax, and to Toulouse, led therefrom. This was the epoch of its great prosperity. It is one of the most ancient Roman colonies in Aquitaine, and its history has been told by many chroniclers, one of the least profuse being St. Gregoire, Archbishop of Tours.

After a frightful massacre in the ninth century the city, its churches, its château and its houses became deserted. It was a century later that Saint Bertrand de l'Isle, who had just been

St. Bertrand de Comminges

sanctified by his uncle the archbishop at Auch, undertook to reconstruct the old city on the ruins of its past. He re-established first the fallen bishopric, and elected himself bishop. This gave him power, and he started forthwith to build the singularly dignified and beautiful cathedral which one sees to-day. Comminges was made a comté in the tenth century, and the fief contained two hundred and eighty-eight towns and villages and nine castellanies, all owing allegiance to the Comte de Comminges. The episcopal jurisdiction varied somewhat from these limits, for it included twenty Spanish communes beyond the frontier as well.

One enters St. Bertrand to-day by the great arched gateway, or Porte Majou, which bears over its lintel the arms of the Cardinal de Foix. As a grand historical monument St. Bertrand commences well. Narrow, crooked, little streets climb to the platform terrace above where sits the cathedral. It is a sad, grim journey, this mounting through the deserted streets, with here and there a Gothic or Renaissance column built helter-skelter into a house front, and the suggestion of a barred Gothic window or a delicate Renaissance doorway now far removed from its original functions. At last one reaches a great mass of tumbled stones which one is

told is the ruin of the episcopal palace built by St. Bertrand himself. But what would you? It is just this atmosphere of antiquity that one comes here to breathe, and certainly a more musty and less worldly one it would be difficult to find outside the catacombs of Rome.

Another city gate, the Porte Cabirole, still keeps the flame of mediævalism alive; and, near by, is the most interesting architectural bit of all, a diminutive, detached tower-stairway, dating at least from the fifteenth century. It is an admirable architectural note, quite in contrast with all the grimness and sadness of the rest of the ruins.

Opposite the entrance to the walled city is a curious monumental gateway, better described as a *barbacane,* or perhaps a great watch-tower, through which one has still to pass. The upper town had no source of water supply, so a well was cut down in the rock, and this tower served as its protection. There is another gate, still, in the encircling city walls, the third, the Porte de Herrison. After this, in making the round, one comes again to the Porte Majou, by which one entered.

Rising high above all, on the top of the hill, as does the tower of the abbey on St. Michel's Mount, is the great, grim, newly coiffed tower

of the cathedral of St. Bertrand, one of the most amply endowed and luxuriously installed minor cathedrals in all France. Its description in detail must be had from other works. It suffices here to state that the cathedral is of the town, and the town is of it to such an intermingled extent that it is almost impossible to separate the history of one from that of the other. The site of the cathedral is that of the old Roman citadel. Of the edifice built by St. Bertrand nothing remains but the first arches of the nave and the great westerly tower, really more like a donjon tower than a church steeple. In fact it is not a steeple at all. The whole aspect of St. Bertrand de Comminges, the city, the cathedral and the surroundings is militant, and looks as though it might stand off an army as well as undertake the saving of men's souls.

The altar decorations, sculptured wood and carved stalls of the interior of this great church are very beautiful. Its like is not to be seen in France outside of Amiens, Albi and Rodez. The cloister, too, is superb.

The happenings of the city since its reconstruction were not many, save as they referred to religion. Two bishops of the see became Popes, Clement V and Innocent VIII. The end of the sixteenth century brought the religious

wars, and Huguenots and Calvinists took, and retook, the city in turn. With the Revolution came times nearly as terrible; and, in the new order of things following upon the Concordat, the bishopric was definitely suppressed. The few hundred inhabitants of to-day live in a city almost as dead as Pompeii or Les Baux.

The word Comminges signifies an assembly inhabited by the Convenæ in the time of Cæsar. The inhabitants of feudal times were known as Commingeois. "The Commingeois are naturally warriors," wrote St. Bertrand de Comminges, and from this it is not difficult to follow the evolution of their dainty little feudal city, though difficult enough to find the reason for its practical desertion to-day.

The Comtes de Comminges were an able and vigorous race, if we are to believe the records they left behind. There was one, Loup-Aznar, who lived in 932, who rode horse-back at the age of a hundred and five, and one of his descendants was married seven times. It was a Comte de Comminges, in the time of Louis XIV, who was compared by that monarch to a great cannon ball, whose chief efficiency was its size. Subsequently cannon balls, in France, came to be called "Comminges." Not a very great fame this, but still fame, and it was still for

their warlike spirit that the Commingeois were commended.

Jean Bertrand, a one-time Archbishop of Comminges, became a Cardinal of France upon the recommendation of Henri II. The king afterwards confessed that he was persuaded to urge his appointment by Diane de Poitiers, who was distributing her favours rather freely just at that time.

The "Mémoires du Comte de Comminges" was the title borne by one of the most celebrated works of fiction of the eighteenth century — a predecessor of the Dumas style of romance. It is a work which has often been confounded by amateur students of French history with the "Mémoires du Philippe de Commines," who lived in another era altogether. The former was fiction, pure and simple, with its scene laid in the little Pyrenean community, while the latter was fact woven around the life of one who lived centuries later, in Flanders.

CHAPTER XV

BÉARN AND THE BÉARNAIS

The Béarnais and the Basques have no historical monuments in their country anterior to the Roman invasion, and for that matter Roman monuments themselves are nearly non-existent. Medals and coins have been occasionally found which tell a story neglected by the chroniclers, or fill a gap which would be otherwise unbridged, but in the main there is little remaining of a period so far remote, save infrequent fragmentary examples of Arab or Saracen art. Of later times as well, the splendid building eras of Gothic and Renaissance architecture, there is but little that is monumental, or indeed remarkable for richness. Architectural styles were strong and hardy, but most often they were a mélange of foreign forms, combined and presented anew by local builders. This makes for picturesqueness at any rate, so, taken as a whole, what the extreme southwest of France lacks in architectural magnifi-

cence it makes up for in quaintness and variety, and above all environment.

The historic memories hovering around Béarn and Navarre are so many and varied that each will have to establish them for himself if any pretence at completeness is to be made, and then the sum total will fall far short of reality. All are dear to the Béarnais themselves, from the legendary first sip of wine of the infant Henri to the more real, but of still doubtful authenticity, tortoise-shell cradle. One absorbs them all readily enough, on the spot, or in any perusal of French history of the Middle Ages, and the names of the Centulles, the Gastons, the Marguerites and the Henris are ever occurring and recurring whichever by-path one takes.

The province of Béarn came to the Centulle house in the ninth century, and passed by marriage (in 1170) to that of Moncade, from which family it was transferred as a dowry, in 1290, to Bernard III, Comte de Foix, on condition that Béarn and Foix should be united in perpetuity. Gaston IX, a later descendant, by marrying Elénore de Navarre, in 1434, united the two sovereignties, and Catherine de Foix, his sister, in turn made over her hereditary

rights to her husband, Comte de Pentièvre et de Périgord.

In spite of this, Béarn and the Béarnais have always kept a distinct and separate identity from that of their allies and associates, and Henri, Prince de Béarn, is as often thought of by the Béarnais as Henri, Roi de Navarre, even though the two titles belonged to one and the same person.

The most brilliant epoch of Béarn was that which began with Henri II and Marguerite de Valois. The old Gothic castle at Pau had become metamorphosed into a Renaissance palace, and the most illustrious princess of her century drew thither the most reputed savants, litterateurs, and artists in the world, until the little Pyrenean capital became known as the "*Parnasse Béarnais.*" Jean d'Albret and Catherine were succeeded by their eldest son, who became Henri II of Navarre, and Henri I of Béarn. This prince was born in the month of August, 1503, and was given the name of Henri because it was the name of one of two faithful German pilgrims who passed by, en route to pay their devotions at the shrine of St. Jacques de Compestelle. The pilgrims were given hospitality by the king of Navarre, and, because it was thought meet that the newborn

prince should bear a worthy, even though humble name, he was baptized thus, though the proud countrymen of Béarn did resent it. The circumstance is curiously worthy of record.

Béarn and Navarre are above all other provinces of France proud indeed of the great names of history, and Henri Quatre and Gaston Phœbus were hung well on the line in the royal portrait galleries of their time. The first was more of a good ruler than a gallant chevalier, and the second possessed a regal personality which gave him a place almost as exalted as that of his brother prince. Together they gave an indescribable lustre to the country of their birth.

In erecting the statue of Henri IV in the Place Royale at Pau the Béarnais rendered homage to the most illustrious son of Béarn. Without Henri Quatre one would not know that Béarn had ever existed, for it was he who carried its name and fame afar. Luchon, Biarritz and Pau are known of men and women of all nations as tourist places of a supreme rank, but the mind ever wanders back to the days of the gallant, rough, unpolished Henri who went up to Paris and, in spite of opposition, became the first Bourbon king of the French after the Valois line was exhausted.

The Béarnais — the mountaineers, as they were often contemptuously referred to at the capital — had a time of it making their way at Paris, for there was a rivalry and jealousy against the southerners at Paris which was only explainable by traditionary prejudice.

When Catherine de Medici was making the first efforts to marry off her daughter Marguerite to Henri, Prince of Béarn, the feeling was at its height. It is curious to remark in this connection that the two queens of Navarre by the name of Marguerite were separated by only a half century of time, and both were to become famous in the world of letters, the first for her "Heptameron" and the second for her "Mémoires."

The daughter of the Medici would have none of the rough prince of Béarn and told her mother so plainly, resenting the fact that he was a Protestant as much as anything.

"My daughter, listen," said the queen mother. "This marriage is indispensable for reasons of state. The king, your brother, and I myself, like the king of Navarre as little as you do. That little kingdom in the high valleys of the Pyrenees is a veritable thorn in our sides, but by some means or other we must pluck it out."

"I shall go to Nerac, in Gascony," the queen mother continued, "to conclude a treaty with my sister, Reine Jeanne, the mother of Henri de Béarn. When an alliance is concluded between the queen of Navarre and myself your marriage *shall* take place." This was final!

Tradition — or perhaps it is a fact, though the average traveller won't remark it — says that the Béarnais are an irascible and jealous people. Proud they are, but there are no external evidences to show that they are more irascible or jealous than any other folk one meets in the French countryside. In the valleys the type is more delicate than that of the inhabitants of the mountain slopes, and throughout they are fervidly religious without being in the least fanatical.

The same tradition that says the Béarnais are rough, irascible spirits, says also that they seek for a summary personal vengeance rather than let the process of law take its course. There's something of philosophy in this, if it's true, but again it is reiterated there are no visible signs that the peasant of Béarn is of the knife-drawing class of humanity to which belong Sicilians and gypsies. The writer on more than one occasion has been stalled in the Pyrenees while blazing an automobile trail up

some valley road that he ought not to have attempted, and has found the Béarnais a faithful, willing worker in helping him out of a hole (this is literal), and glad indeed to accept such an honorarium as was bestowed upon him. Nothing of brigandage in this!

The passing times change men and manners, and when it is recorded by the préfet of the Basses-Pyrénées that no department ever had so much law-business going on before in its courts, it shows at least that if the Béarnais do have their little troubles among themselves, they are now a law-loving, law-abiding people.

They are good livers and drinkers too, of much the same stamp as the gallant Gascons, of whom Dumas wrote. It was in a Béarnais inn that the Prince de Conti saw the following couplet chalked upon the wall:

"Je m'apuelle Robineau,
Et je bois mon vin sans eaux."

Whereupon he added:

"Et moi, Prince de Conti,
Sans eaux je le bois aussi."

The sentiment is not very high; window-pane poetry and the like never does soar; but

it is significant of the good living of past and present times in France, and in these parts in particular.

The peasant dress of the Béarnais is the same throughout all the communes. They wear a woollen head-dress, something like that of the Basques. It is round, generally brown, and usually drawn down over the left ear in a most *dégagé* fashion. The student of Paris' Latin Quarter is a poor copy of a Béarnais so far as his cap goes. In some parts of the plain below the foot-hills of the Pyrenees, — around Tarbes for example, — the cap is replaced by a little round hat, a sort of a cross between that sometimes worn by the Breton, and a "bowler" of the vintage of '83.

A long blouse-like coat, or jacket, is worn, and woollen breeches and gaiters, of such variegated colouring as appeals to each individual himself. In style the costume of the Béarnais is national; in colour it is anything you like and individual, but mostly brown or gray of those shades which were the progenitors of what we have come to know as khaki.

The shepherds and cattle guardians, indeed all of the inhabitants of the higher valleys and slopes, dress similarly, but in stuffs of much coarser texture and heavier weight, and wear

quite as much clothing in summer as in the coldest days of winter.

The Béarnais speak a *patois,* or idiom, composed of the structural elements of Celtic, Latin and Spanish. It is not a language, like the Breton or the Basque, but simply a hybrid means of expression, difficult enough for outsiders to become proficient in, but not at all unfamiliar in sound to one used to the expressions of the Latin races. It is more like the Provençal of the Bouches-du-Rhône than anything else, but very little like the Romance tongue of Languedoc.

In cadence the Béarnais *patois* is sweet and musical, and the literature of the tongue, mostly pastoral poetry, is of a beauty approaching the epilogues of Virgil.

The *patois* is the speech of the country people, and French that of the town dwellers. The educated classes may speak French, but, almost without exceptions, they know also the *patois,* as is the case in Provence, where the *patois* is reckoned no *patois* at all, but a real tongue, and has the most profuse literature of any of the anciently spoken tongues of France.

The following lines in the Béarnais *patois* show its possibilities. They were sung when

Jeanne de Navarre was giving birth to the infant prince who was to become Henri IV.

"Nouste Dame deü cap deü poün,
Adyudat-me à d'acquest'hore;
Pregats au Dioü deü ceü
Qu'emboulle bié delioura ceü,
D'u maynat qu'em hassie lou doun
Tou d'inqu' aü haut dous mounts l'implore
Adyudat-me à d'acquest'hore."

The significance of these lines was that the queen prayed God that she might be delivered of her child without agony, but above all that it might be born a boy.

Béarn was fairly populous in the old days with a well distributed population, and the towns were all relatively largely inhabited. Now, in some sections, as in the Pays de Baretous, for example, the region is losing its population daily, and in half a century the figures have decreased something like thirty per cent. Like many other Pyrenean valleys the population has largely emigrated to what they call "les Amériques," meaning, in this case, South or Central America, never North America. Buenos Ayres they know, also "la ville de Mexique," but New York is a vague, meaningless term to the peasant of the French Pyrenees.

The *bastides,* — the country houses, often fortified châteaux with dependencies, — originally a Béarnais institution, often remained stagnant hamlets or villages instead of developing into prosperous towns as they did elsewhere in the Midi of France, particularly in Gascogne and Languedoc. Many a time their sites had been chosen fortunately, but instead of a bourg growing up around them they remained isolated and backward for no apparent reason whatever.

This has been the fate of Labastide-Villefranche in Béarn. One traces readily enough the outlines of the original *bastide,* but more than all else marvels at the great, four-storied donjon tower, planned by the father of the illustrious Gaston Phœbus of Foix. This sentinel tower stood at the juncture of the principalities of Béarn, Bidache and Navarre. Gaston Phœbus finished this great donjon with the same generous hand with which he endowed everything he touched, and it ranks among the best of its era wherever found. The *bastide* and its dependencies grew up around the foot of this tower, but there is nothing else to give the little town — or more properly village — any distinction whatever; it still remains merely a delightful old-world spot, endowed

with a charming situation. It calls itself a *rendezvous commercial,* but beyond being a cattle-market of some importance, thanks to its being the centre of a spider's web of roads, not many outside the immediate neighbourhood have ever heard its name mentioned, or seen it in print.

In this same connection it is to be noted that all of Béarn and the Basque provinces are celebrated for their cattle. What Arabia is to the horse, the Pyrenean province of Béarn, more especially the gracious valley of Barétous, called the "Jardin de Béarn," is to the bovine race.

Another delightful, romantic corner of Béarn is the valley of the Aspe. Urdos is its principal town, and here one sees ancient customs as quaint as one is likely to find hereabouts. Urdos is but a long-drawn-out, one-street village along the banks of the Gave d'Aspe, but it is lively and animated with all the gaiety of the Latin life. On a fête day omnibuses, country carts, donkeys, mules and even oxen bring a very respectable crowd to town, and there is much merry-making of a kind which knows not modern amusements in the least degree. Continuous dancing, — all day and all night — interspersed with eating and drinking suffices.

Something of the sort was going on, the author and artist thought, when they arrived at five on a delightful June day; but no, it was nothing but the marriage feast of a local official, and though all the rooms of the one establishment which was dignified by the name of a hotel were taken shelter was found at an humble inn kept by a worthy widow. She certainly was worthy, for she charged for dinner, lodging, and coffee in the morning, for two persons, but the small sum of six francs and didn't think the automobile, which was lodged in the shed with the sheep and goats and cows, was an excuse for sticking on a single sou. She was more than worthy; she was gentle and kind, for when a fellow traveller, a French Alpinist, would find a guide to show him the way across the mountain on the morrow, and so on down into the Val d'Ossau, she expostulated and told him that the witless peasant he had engaged to show him the road had never been, to her knowledge, out of his own commune. Her interrogation of the unhappy, self-named "guide" was as sharp a bit of cross-questioning as one sees out of court. "No, he knew not the route, but all one had to do was to go up the mountain first and then down the other side." All very well, but which other side?

There were many ramifications. He was sure of being able to find his way, he said, but the Frenchman became suspicious, and the bustling landlady found another who *did* know, and would work by some other system than the rule of thumb, which is a very bad one for mountain climbing. This time the intrepid tourist found a real guide and not a mere "*cultivateur,*" as the mistress of the inn contemptuously called the first.

CHAPTER XVI

OF THE HISTORY AND TOPOGRAPHY OF BÉARN

The old Vicomté de Béarn lay snug within the embrace of the Pyrenees between Foix, Comminges and Basse Navarre. It was further divided into various small districts whose entities were later swallowed by the parent state, and still later by the royal domain under the rule of Henry IV.

There is one of these divisions, which not every traveller through the smiling valleys of the Pyrenees knows either by name or history. It is the Pays de Bidache, formerly the principality of Bidache, a tiny kingdom whose sovereign belonged to the house of Grammont. This little principality was analogous to that of Liechtenstein, lying between Switzerland and Austria. Nothing remains but the title, and the Grammonts, who figure in the noblesse of France to-day, are still by right Princes de Bidache, the eldest of the family being also Duc de Guiche. The château of the Grammonts at Bidache, which is a town of eight or nine

hundred inhabitants, sits high on the hill overlooking the town. It is in ruins, but, nevertheless, there are some very considerable vestiges remaining of the glories that it possessed in the times of Henri IV when the house of Grammont was at its greatest height.

In the little village church are the tombs of the Sires de Grammont, notably that of the Maréchal Antoine III, who died in 1678.

Bidache was made a *duché-pairie* for the family De Grammont, who, by virtue of their letters patent, were absolute sovereigns. The Princes de Bidache, up to the Revolution, exercised all the rights of a chief of state, a curious latter day survival of feudal powers.

Tradition plays no small part even to-day in the affairs of the De Grammonts, and the old walls of the family château could tell much that outsiders would hardly suspect. One fact has leaked out and is on public record. The sons born in the family are usually named Agenor, and the daughters Corisande, names illustrious in the golden days of Béarnais history.

Throughout all this ancient principality of Bidache the spirit of feudality has been effaced in these later Republican days, a thing the kings of France and Navarre and the parlément de Pau could not accomplish. As in other

parts of Béarn and the Basque provinces, it is now entirely swallowed by "*la nationalité française.*"

The Duc de Grammont still possesses the Château de Guiche, and the non-forfeitable titles of his ancestors; but, virtually, he is no more than any other citizen.

Just north from Bidache, set whimsically on a hillside above the Adour, is the feudal village of Hastingues. It was an English creation, founded by John of Hastings towards 1300, for Edward I. It is crowded to the very walls with curious old houses in which its inhabitants live with much more tranquillity than in feudal times. The fourteenth-century fortifications are still much in evidence.

Up the river from Hastingues is Peyrehorade, or in the old Béarnais tongue Pérorade, literally *roche-percée.* It is the metropolis of the region, and has a population of twenty-five hundred simple folk who live tight little lives, and not more than once in a generation get fifty miles away from their home.

The Vicomtes d'Orthe fortified the city in olden times, and the ruined château-fort of Aspremont on the hillside overlooking the river valley and the town tells the story of feudal combat far better than the restored and made-

over edifices of a contemporary period. Its pentagonal donjon of the sixteenth century is as grim and imposing a tower of its class as may be conceived.

Below, along the river bank, is the sixteenth-century château of Montréal, its walls still standing flanked with grim, heavy, uncoiffed towers. It is all sadly disfigured, like its fellow on the heights; but the very sadness of it all makes it the more emphatic as a historical monument of the past.

In the villages round about the dominant industry appears to be *sabot*-making, as in the Basque country it is the making of *espadrilles*. Each is a species of shoe-making which knows not automatic machinery, nor ever will.

Lying between Basse Navarre and Béarn was the Pays de Soule, with Mauléon and Tardets as its chief centres of population. The district has a bit of feudal history which is interesting. It was a region of mediocre extent — not more than thirty leagues square — but with a political administration more complex than any Gerrymandering administration has dared to conceive since.

The district was divided into three *Messageries*, Haute Soule, Basse Soule and Arbailles. Each of these divisions had at its head a func-

tionary called a *Messager,* and each was in turn divided again into smaller parcels of territory called *Vics,* each of which had a sort of beadle as an official head, called a *Degan.*

Popular election put all these officials in power, but the Courts of Justice were administered by the king of France, as heir to the kings of Navarre.

Mauléon takes its name from the old château which in the local tongue was known as Malo-Leone. Mainly it is of the fifteenth century. The interior court has been made over into a sort of formal garden, quite out of keeping with its former purpose, and by far the most impressive suggestions are received from the exterior. There are the usual underground prisons, or *cachots,* which the guardian takes pleasure in showing.

From the *chemin de ronde,* encircling the central tower, one has a wide-spread panorama of the Gave de Mauléon as it rushes down from its cradle near the crest of the Pyrenees. Mauléon is the centre for the manufacture of the local Pyrenean variety of footwear called *espadrilles,* a sort of a cross between a sandal and a moccasin, with a rope sole. The population who work at this trade are mostly Spaniards from Ronça, Pamplona and in fact all

Aragon. This accounts largely for Mauléon's recent increase in population, whilst most other neighbouring small towns have reduced their ranks. For this reason Mauléon is a phenomenon. Paris and the great provincial capitals, like Marseilles, Bordeaux and Rouen, constantly increase in numbers, but most of the small towns of France either stand still, or more likely fall off in numbers Here at this little Pyrenean centre the population has doubled since the Franco-Prussian war.

The historical monuments of Mauléon are not many, but the whole ensemble is warm in its unassuming appeal to the lover of new sensations. The lower town is simply laid out, has the conventional tree-bordered promenade of a small French town, its *fronton de pelote* (the national game of these parts), a fine old Renaissance house called the Hôtel d'Andurrian, and a cross-surmounted column which looks ancient, and is certainly picturesque.

Dumas laid the scene of one of his celebrated sword and cloak romances here at Mauléon, but as the critics say, he so often distorted facts, and built châteaux that never existed, the scene might as well have been somewhere else. This is not saying that they were not romances which have been seldom, if ever, equalled.

They were indeed the peers of their class. Let travellers in France read and re-read such romances as the D'Artagnan series, or even Monte Cristo, and they will fall far more readily into the spirit of things in feudal times than they will by attempting to digest Carlylean rant and guide-book literature made in the British Museum. Dumas, at any rate, had the genuine spirit of the French, and with it well-seasoned everything he wrote. The story of Agenor de Mauléon, a real chevalier of romance and fable, is very nearly as good as his best.

Leaving Tardets by the Route d'Oloron, one makes his way by a veritable mountain road. Its rises and falls are not sharp, but they are frequent, and on each side rear small, rocky peaks and great *mamelons* of stone, as in the Val d'Enfer of Dante.

Montory is the first considerable village en route, and if French is to-day the national language, one would not think it from anything heard here offhand, for the inhabitants speak mostly Basque. In spite of this, the inhabitants, by reason of being under the domination of Oloron, consider themselves Béarnais.

Montory, and the Barétous near-by, have intimate relations with Spain. All Aragon and Navarre, at least all those who trade horses

and mules, come through here to the markets of Gascogne and Poitou. Frequently they don't get any farther than Oloron, having sold their stock to the Béarnais traders at this point. The Béarnais horse-dealers are the worthy rivals of the Maquignons of Brittany.

The next village of the Barétous is Lanne, huddled close beneath the flanks of a thousand-metre peak, called the Basse-Blanc. Lanne possesses a diminutive château — called a *gentilhommière* in olden times, a name which explains itself. The edifice is not a very grand or imposing structure, and one takes it to be more of a country-house than a stronghold, much the same sort of a habitation as one imagines the paternal roof of D'Artagnan, comrade of the Mousquetaires, to have been.

Aramits, near by, furnished, with but little evolution, one of the heroic names of the D'Artagnan romances, it may be remarked. If one cares to linger in a historic, romantic literary shrine, he could do worse than stay at Aramits' Hôtel Loubeu. As for the inner man, nothing more excellent and simple can be found than the fare of this little country inn of a practically unknown corner of the Pyrenees. A diligence runs out from Oloron, fourteen kilometres, so the place is not wholly inaccessible.

Lanne's humble château, nothing more than a residence of a poor, but proud seigneur of Gascogne, is an attractive enough monument to awaken vivid memories of what may have gone on within its walls in the past, and in connection with the neighbouring venerable church and cemetery suggests a romance as well as any dumb thing can.

Aramits is bereft of historical monuments save the Mairie of to-day, which was formerly the chamber of the syndics who exercised judiciary functions here (and in the five neighbouring villages) under the orders of the États de Béarn.

Another delightful and but little known corner of Béarn is the valley of the Aspe, leading directly south from Oloron into the high valley of the Pyrenees. The Pas d'Aspe is at an elevation of seventeen hundred metres. Majestic peaks close in the valley and its half a dozen curious little towns; and, if one asks a native of anything so far away as Pau or Mauléon, perhaps fifty miles as the crow flies, he says simply: "*Je ne sais pas! Je ne peux pas savoir, moi, je passe tous mes jours dans la vallée d'Aspe.*" Even when you ask the route over the mountain, that you may make your way back again by the Val d'Ossau, it is the same

thing; they have never been that way themselves and are honest enough, luckily, not to give you directions that might put you off the road.

Directly before one is the Pic d'Anie, the king mountain of the chain of the Pyrenees between the Aspe and the sea to the westward.

Urdos is the last settlement of size as one mounts the valley. Above, the carriage road continues fairly good to the frontier, but the side roads are mere mule paths and trails. One of these zigzags its way craftily up to the Fort d'Urdos or Portalet. Here the grim walls, with their machicolations and bastions and redoubts cut out from the rock itself, give one an uncanny feeling as if some danger portended; but every one assures you that nothing of the sort will ever take place between France and Spain. This fortification is a very recent work, and formidable for its mere size, if not for the thickness of its walls. It was built in 1838-1848, at the time when Lyons, Paris and other important French cities were fortified anew.

War may not be imminent or even probable, but the best safeguard against it is protection, and so the Spaniards themselves have taken pattern of the French and erected an equally imposing fortress just over the border at the

Col de Lladrones, in the valley of the Aragon, and still other batteries at Canfranc.

One of the topographic and scenic wonders of the world which belongs to Béarn is the Cirque de Gavarnie, that rock-surrounded amphitheatre of waterfalls, icy pools and caverns.

Of the Cirque de Gavarnie, Victor Hugo wrote: —

> " Quel cyclope savant de l'âge évanoui,
> Quel être monstrueux, plus grand que les idées,
> A pris un compas haut de cent mille coudées
> Et, le tournant d'un doigt prodigieux et sûr,
> A tracé ce grand cercle au niveau de l'azur ? "

Just below the " Cirque " is the little village of Gavarnie, which before the Revolution was a property of the Maltese Order, it having previously belonged to the Templars. Vestiges of their former *presbytère* and of their lodgings may be seen. A gruesome relic was formerly kept in the church, but it has fortunately been removed to-day. It was no less than a dozen bleached skulls of a band of unfortunate chevaliers who had been decapitated on the spot in some classic encounter the record of which has been lost to history.

Above Gavarnie, on the frontier crest of the Pyrenees, is the famous Brèche de Roland.

One remembers here, if ever, his schoolboy days, and the "Song of Roland" rings ever in his ears.

> "High are the hills and huge and dim with cloud;
> Down in the deeps and living streams are loud."

The Brèche de Roland, with the Col de Roncevaux, shares the fame of being the most celebrated pass of the Pyrenees. It is a vast rock fissure, at least three hundred feet in height. As a strategic point of defence against an invading army or a band of smugglers ten men could hold it against a hundred and a hundred against a thousand. At each side rises an unscalable rock wall with a height of from three to six hundred feet.

The legend of this famous Brèche is this: Roland mounted on his charger would have passed the Pyrenees, so giving a swift clean cut of his famous sword he clave the granite wall fair in halves, and for this reason the mountaineers have ever called it the Brèche de Roland. The Tours de Marboré were built in the old days to further defend the passage, a sort of a trap, or barbican, being a further defence on French soil.

The aspect roundabout is as of a desert, ex-

cept that it is mountainous, and the gray sterile juts of rock and the snows of winter — here at least five months of the year — might well lead one to imagine it were a pass in the Himalayas.

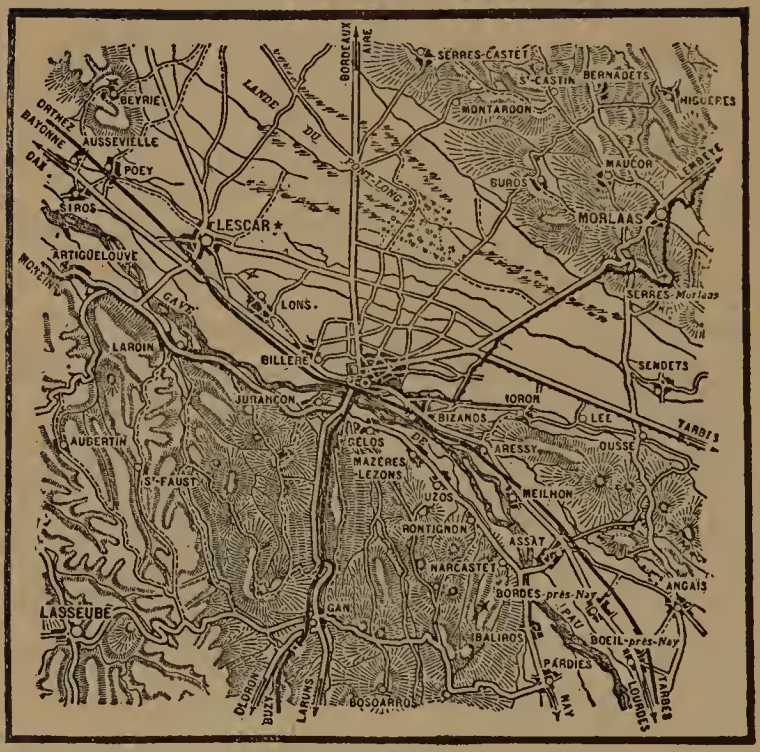
Bordering upon Béarn on the north is the ancient Comté d'Armagnac, a detached corner of the Duché de Gascogne, which dates its history from the tenth century. It passed to Henri d'Albret, king of Navarre, in 1525, and by reason of belonging to the crown of Navarre came to France in due course.

The ancient family of Armagnac had many famous names on its roll: the first Comte Bernard, the founder; Bernard II, who founded the Abbey of Saint Pé; Gerard II, successor of the preceding and a warrior as well; Bernard III, canon of Sainte-Marie d'Auch; Gerard III, who united the Comté de Fezensac with Armagnac; Bernard V, who, in league with the Comtes de Toulouse, went up against Saint Louis; Gerard V, who became an ally of the English king; Bernard VI, who warred all his life with Roger-Bernard, Comte de Foix, on the subject of the succession of the Vicomté de Béarn, to which he pretended; Jean II, who terminated the quarrel with the house of Foix; Bernard VI, the most famous warrior of his

race, whose name is written in letters of blood in the chronicles of the wars of the Armagnacs and Jean IV, who was called "Comte par la grace de Dieu."

CHAPTER XVII

PAU AND ITS CHÂTEAU



Pau and the Surrounding Country

Pau, *ville d'hiver mondaine et cosmopolite,* is the way the railway-guides describe the ancient capital of Béarn, and it takes no profound

Arms of the City of Pau

knowledge of the subtleties of the French language to grasp the significance of the phrase. If Pau was not all this it would be delightful, but what with big hotels, golf and tennis clubs, and a pack of fox-hounds, there is little of the sanctity of romance hanging over it to-day, in spite of the existence of the old château of Henri IV's Bourbon ancestors.

The life of Pau, in every phase, is to-day ardent and strenuous, with the going and coming of automobile tourists and fox hunters, semi-invalids and what not. In the gallant days of old, when princes and their followers held sway in the ancient Béarnaise capital, it was different, quite different, and the paternal château of the D'Albrets was a great deal more a typical château of its time than it has since become.

If the observation is worth anything to the reader "*Pau est la petite Nice des Pyrénées.*" This is complimentary, or the reverse, as one happens to think. Pau's attractions are many, in spite of the fact that it has become a typical tourist resort.

The château itself, even as it stands in its reconstructed form, is a pleasing enough structure, as imposingly grand as many in Touraine. This palace of kings and queens, which saw

the birth of the Béarnais prince who was to reign at Paris, has been remodelled and restored, but, in spite of this, it still remains the key-note of the whole gamut of the charms of Pau, and indeed of all Béarn.

The Revolution and Louis Philippe are jointly responsible for much of the garish crudity of the present arrangement of the Château de Pau. The mere fact that the edifice was a prison and a barracks from 1793 to 1808 accounts for much of the indignity thrust upon it, and of the present furnishings — always excepting that exceedingly popular tortoise-shell cradle — only the wall tapestries may be considered truly great. In spite of this, the memories of the D'Albrets, of Henri IV, of Gaston, and of the " Marguerite des Marguerites " still hang about its apartments and corridors.

The Vicomte de Béarn who had the idea of transferring his capital from Morlaas to Pau was a man of taste. At the borders of his newly acquired territory he planted three *pieux* or *pau,* and this gave the name to the new city, which possessed then, as now, one of the most admirable scenic situations of France, a terrace a hundred feet or more above the Gave, with a mountain background, and a low-lying valley before.

The English discovered Pau as early as 1785, fifty years before Lord Brougham discovered Cannes. It was Arthur Young, that indefatigable traveller and agriculturalist, who stood as godfather to Pau as a tourist resort, though truth to tell he was more interested in industry and turnip-growing than in the butterfly doings of "*les éléments étrangers*" in French watering places of to-day.

Throngs of strangers come to Pau to-day, and its thirty-five thousand souls make a living from the visitors, instead of the ten thousand of a century and a quarter ago.

The people of Pau, its business men at any rate, think their city is the chief in rank of the Basses-Pyrénées. Figures do not lie, however, and the local branch of the Banque de France ranks as number sixty-five in volume of business done on a list of a hundred and twenty-six, while Bayonne, the real centre of commercialism south of Bordeaux, is numbered fifteen. In population the two cities rank about the same.

The real transformation of Pau into a city of pleasure is a work, however, of our own time. It was in the mid-nineteenth century that the capital of Béarn came to be widely known as a resort for semi-invalids. Just what degree

of curative excellencies Pau possesses it is not for the author of this book to attempt to state, but probably it is its freedom from cold north and east winds. Otherwise the winter climate is wintry to a certain degree, and frequently damp, but an appreciable mildness is often to be noted here when the Riviera is found in the icy grip of the Rhône valley *mistral.*

The contrast of the new and the old at Pau is greatly to be remarked. There are streets which the French describe as *neuves et coquettes,* and there are others grim, mossy and as dead as Pompeii, as far as present-day life and surroundings are concerned.

Formerly the river Hédas, or more properly a rivulet, filled the moat of the château of the kings of Navarre, but now this is lacking.

The château has long been despoiled of its furnishings of the time of Henri IV and his immediate successors. Nothing but the mere walls remain as a souvenir of those royal days.

The palatial apartments have been in part destroyed, and in part restored or remodelled, and not until Napoleon III were steps taken to keep alive such of the mediæval aspect as still remained.

Pau, with all its charm and attraction for lovers of history and romance, has become

sadly over-run of late with diversions which comport little enough with the spirit of other days. Fox-hunting, golf tournaments and all the Anglo-Saxon importations of a colony of indulgent visitors from England and America are a poor substitute for the jousting tournaments, the *jeux de paume* and the pageants of the days of the brave king of Navarre. Still Pau, its site and its situation, is wonderfully fine.

Pau is the veritable queen of the Pyrenean cities and towns, and mingles all the elements of the super-civilization of the twentieth century with the sanctity of memories of feudal times. The Palais d'Hiver shares the architectural dignity of the city with the château, but a comparison always redounds to the credit of the latter.

Below the terrace flows the Gave de Pau, and separates the verdant faubourg of Jurançon from the parent city. The sunlight is brilliant here, and the very atmosphere, whether it be winter or summer, is, as Jean Rameau puts it, like the laughter of the Béarnais, scintillating and sympathetic.

The memories of the past which come from the contemplation of the really charming historical monuments of Pau and its neighbour-

hood are admirable, we all admit, but it is disconcerting all the same to read in the local paper, in the café, as you are taking your appetizer before dinner, that " the day was characterized with fine weather and the Pau fox-hounds met this morning at the Poteau d'Escoubes, some twenty kilometres away to the north. A short run uncovered a fox in a spinny, and in time he was ' earthed ' near Lascaveries ! "

This is not what one comes to the south of France to find, and the writer is uncompromisingly against it, not because it is fox-hunting, but because it is so entirely out of place.

The early history of the city of Pau is enveloped in obscurity. Some sort of a fortified residence took shape here under Centulle IV in the ninth century, and this noble vicomte was the first to be freed of all vassalage to the Duc d'Aquitaine, and allowed the dignity of independent sovereignty. On the occasion when the Bishop Amatus of Oloron, the legate of the Pope Gregory VII, came to confer upon Centulle the title of comte, in place of that of vicomte which he had inherited from his fathers, a ceremony took place which was the forerunner of the brilliant gatherings of later days. Says the chronicler: " The drawbridge

of the château lowered before the Papal Legate, and as quickly as possible he delivered himself of the *mandement* of the Pope, a document which meant much to the future history of Béarn."

Pau owes its fame and prosperity to the building of a château here by the Béarnais princes. To shelter and protect themselves from the incursions of the Saracens a fortress-château was first built high on a plateau overlooking the valley of the Ossau. Possession was taken of the ground necessary for the site by a bargain made with the inhabitants, whereby a certain area of paced-off ground was to be given, by the original dwellers here, in return for the privilege of always being present (they and their descendants) at the sittings of the court.

Just who built or planned the present Château de Pau appears to be doubtful. Of course it is not a thoroughly consistent or homogeneous work; few mediæval châteaux are. That master-builder Gaston certainly had something to do with its erection, as Froissart recounts that when this prince came to visit the Comte d'Armagnac at Tarbes he told his host that "*il y a faisait édifier un moult bel chastel en la ville de Pau, au dehors la ville sur la rivière*

du Gave." The great tower is, as usual, credited to Gaston, and it is assuredly after his manner.

Old authors nodded, and sometimes got their facts mixed, so one is not surprised to read on the authority of another chronicler of the time, the Abbé d'Expilly, that "the Château de Pau was built by Alain d'Albret during the regency of Henri II, towards 1518." Favyn, in his "Histoire de Navarre," says, "*Henri II fit bastir à Pau une maison assez belle et assez forte selon l'assiette du pays.*" These conflicting statements quite prepare one to learn that Michaud in his "Marguerite de Valois" says that that "friend of the arts and humanity" built the "Palais de Pau." These quotations are given as showing the futility of any historian of to-day being able to give unassailable facts, even if he goes to that shelter under which so many take refuge — "original sources."

One learns from observation that Pau's château, like most others of mediæval times, is made up of non-contemporaneous parts. It is probable that the original edifice served for hardly more than a country residence, and that another, built by the Vicomtes de Béarn, replaced it. This last was grand and magnifi-

cent, and with various additions is the same foundation that one sees to-day. It was in the fifteenth century that the present structure was completed, and the gathering and grouping of houses without the walls, all closely hugging the foot of the cliff upon which stood the château, constituted the beginnings of the present city.

It was in 1464 that Gaston IV, Comte de Foix, and usurper of the throne of Navarre, established his residence at Pau, and accorded his followers, and the inhabitants of the immediate neighbourhood, such privileges and concessions as had never been granted by a feudal lord before. A parlément came in time, a university, an academy of letters and a mint, and Pau became the accredited capital of Béarn.

The development of Pau's château is most interesting. It was the family residence of the reigning house of Béarn and Navarre, and the same in which Henri IV first saw light. In general outline it is simple and elegant, but a ruggedness and strength is added by the massive donjon of Gaston Phœbus, a veritable feudal pile, whereas the rest of the establishment is built on residential lines, although well fortified. Other towers also give strength and firmness to the château, and indeed do much to set

off the luxurious grace of the details of the main building. On the northeast is the Tour de Montauset of the fourteenth century, and also two other mediæval towers, one at the westerly and the other at the easterly end. The Tour Neuve, by which one enters, does not belie its name. It is a completely modern work. Numerous alterations and repairs have been undertaken from time to time, but nothing drastic in a constructive sense has been attempted, and so the *cour d'honneur,* by which one gains access to the various apartments, remains as it always was.

Within, the effect is not so happy. There are many admirable fittings and furnishings, but they have been put into place and arranged often with little regard for contemporary appropriateness. This is a pity; it shows a lack of what may be called a sense of fitness. You do not see such blunders made at Langeais on the Loire, for instance, where the owner of the splendid feudal masterpiece which saw the marriage of Anne de Bretagne with Charles VIII has caused it to be wholly furnished with *contemporary* pieces and decorations, *or excellent copies of the period.* Better good copies than bad originals!

The châteaux of France, as distinct from for-

tified castles merely, are what the French classify as "*gloires domestiques,*" and certainly when one looks them over, centuries after they were built, they unquestionably do outclass our ostentatious dwellings of to-day.

There are some excellent Gobelin and Flemish tapestries in the Château de Pau, but they are exposed as if in a museum. Still no study of the work of the tapestry weavers would be complete without an inspection and consideration of these examples at Pau.

The chief "curiosity" of the Château de Pau is the tortoise-shell cradle of Henri of Béarn. It is a curio of value if one likes to think it so, but it must have made an uncomfortable sort of a cradle, and the legend connected with the birth of this prince is surprising enough to hold one's interest of itself without the introduction of this doubtful accessory. However, the recorded historic account of the birth of Henri IV is so fantastic and quaint that even the tortoise-shell cradle may well be authentic for all we can prove to the contrary.

There is a legend to the effect that Henri d'Albret, the grandfather of Henri IV, had told his daughter to sing immediately an heir was born: "*pour ne pas faire un enfant pleureux et rechigné.*" The devoted and faithful Jeanne

chanted as she was bid, and the grandfather, taking the child in his arms and holding it aloft before the people, cried: "*Ma brebis a enfanté un lion.*" The child was then immediately given a few drops of the wine of Jurançon, grown on the hill opposite the château, to assure a temperament robust and vigorous.

As every characteristic of the infant prince's after life comported well with these legendary prophecies, perhaps there is more truth in the anecdote than is usually found in mediæval traditions.

Another account has it that the first nourishment the infant prince took was a "goutte" (*gousse*) of garlic. This was certainly strong nourishment for an infant! The wine story is easier to believe.

The "Chanson Béarnais" sung by Queen Jeanne on the birth of the infant prince has become a classic in the land. As recalled the Béarnais *patois* opened thus:—

"Nostre dame deou cap deou poun, ajouda me a d'aqueste hore."

In French it will be better understood:—

"Notre Dame du bout du pont,
Venez à mon aide en cette heure!
Priez le Dieu du ciel
Qu'il me delivre vite;
Qu'il me donne un garçon.

Tout, jusqu'au haut des monts, vous implore.
Notre Dame du bout du pont,
Venez à mon aide en cette heure."

It was in the little village of Billère, on the Lescar road, just outside the gates of Pau, that the infant Henri was put *en nourrice*. The little Prince de Viane, the name given the eldest son of the house of Navarre, was later confided to a relative, Suzanne de Bourbon, Baronne de Miossens, who lived in the mountain château of Coarraze. The education of the young prince was always an object of great solicitude to the mother, Jeanne d'Albret. For instructor he had one La Gaucherie, a man of austere manners, but of a vast erudition, profoundly religious, but doubtful in his devotion to the Pope and church of Rome.

The child Henri continued his precocious career from the day when he first became a *bon vivant* and a connoisseur of wine. By the age of eleven he had translated the first five books of Cæsar's Commentary, and to the very end kept his literary tastes. He planned to write his mémoires to place beside those of his minister, Sully, and the work was actually begun, but his untimely death lost it to the world.

Another dramatic scene of history identified with the Pau château of the D'Albrets was

when Henri IV took his first armour. As he was out-growing the early years of his youth, the queen of Navarre commanded the appearance at the palace of all the governors of the allied provinces.

The investiture was a romantic and imposing ceremony. The boy prince was given a suit of coat armour, a shield and a sword. A day on horseback, clad in full warrior fashion, was to be the beginning of his military education.

All the world made holiday on this occasion; for three days little was done by the retainers save to sing praises and shout huzzas for their king to be. For the seigneurs and their ladies there were comedies and dances, and for all the people of Gascogne who chose to come there were great fêtes, cavalcades and open-air amusements on the plain of Pau below the castle.

The culmination of the fête was on the evening of the third day. The young prince of Navarre, dressed as a simple Béarnais, with only a gold fleur-de-lis on his *béret,* as a mark of distinction, came out and mingled with his people. As a finishing ceremony the prince took again his sword, and, amid the shouts and acclamations of the populace, plunged it to the

hilt in a tall *broc,* or jug, of wine, and raised it — as if in benediction — first towards the people, then towards the army, then towards the ladies of the court — as a sign of an unwritten pact that he would ever be devoted to them all.

The sun fell behind the crests of the Pyrenees just as this ceremony was finished, and the youth, saluting the smiling king and queen, — his father and mother — left with his "*gens d'armes pour faire le tour de sa Gascogne.*"

The memory of Henri Quatre remains wondrous vivid in the minds of all the Béarnais, even those of the present day, and peasant and bourgeois alike still talk of "*notre Henri,*" when recounting an anecdote or explaining the significance of some historic spot.

Well, why not! Henri lived in a day when men made their mark with a firmer, surer hand, than in these days of high politics and socialistics. The Béarnais never forget that Henri, Prince de Béarn — the rough mountaineer, as he was called at Paris — was a joyous compatriot, a lover and a poet, and that he knew the joys of passion and the sorrows of suffering as well as any man of his time. The following old chanson, sung to-day in many a peasant farmhouse of Béarn proves this: —

"Le cœur blessé, les yeux en larmes,
Ce cœur ne songe qu'à vos charmes,
Vous êtes mon unique amour;
Près de vous je soupire,
Si vous m'aimez à votre tour,
J'aurai tout ce que je désire . . ."

Under the reign of Louis XIV the inhabitants of Pau would have erected a statue in honour of the memory of the greatest of all the Béarnais — of course Henri IV — but the insistent Louis would have none of it, and told them to erect a statue to the reigning monarch or none at all.

Nothing daunted the Béarnais set to work at once and an effigy of Louis XIV rose in place of Henri the mountaineer, but on the pedestal was graven these words: "*A ciou qu'ils l'arrahil de nouste grand Enric.*" "To him who is the grandson of our great Henri."

One of the great names of Pau is that of Jean de Gassion, Maréchal de France. He was born at Pau in 1609. At Rocroi the Grand Condé embraced him after the true French fashion, and vowed that it was to him that victory was due. He was full of wise saws and convictions, and proved himself one of France's great warriors. The following epigrams are worthy of ranking as high as any ever uttered: —

"In war not any obstacle is insurmountable."

"I have in my head and by my side all that is necessary to lead to victory."

"I have much respect, but little love for the fair sex." (He died a *célibataire.*) "My destiny is to die a soldier."

"I get not enough out of life to divide with any one."

This last expression was gallant or ungallant, selfish or unselfish, according as one is able to fathom it.

At any rate de Gassion was a great soldier and served in the Calvinist army of the Duc de Rohan. The following "*mot*" describes his character: "Will you be able to follow us?" asked de Rohan at the Battle of the Pont de Camerety in Gascogne. "What is to hinder?" demanded the future Maréchal of France, "you never go too fast for us, except in retreat."

He recruited a company of French for the aid of Gustavus Adolphus in his campaign in Upper Saxony, and presented himself before that monarch on the battle field with the following words: "Sire, I come with my Frenchmen; the mention of your name has induced them to leave their homes in the Pyrenees and offer

you their services. . . .'' At the battle of Leipzig (1631) Gassion and his men charged three times and covered themselves with glory.

The '' Histoire de Maréchal de Gassion,'' by the Abbé de Puré, and another by his almoner Duprat, an '' Eloge de Gassion '' (appearing in the eighteenth century), are most interesting reading. De Gassion it would seem was one of the chief anecdotal characters of French history.

Another of the shining lights of Pau (though he was born at Gan in the suburbs) was Pierre de Marca, an antiquarian whose researches on the treasures of Béarn have made possible the writings of hundreds of his followers. He was born in Pau a few years before Henri IV, and died an Archbishop of Paris in 1689.

His epitaph is a literary curiosity.

"Ci-git Monseigneur de Marca,
Que le Roi sagement marqua
Pour le Prelate de son Eglise,
Mais la mort qui le remarqua
Et qui se plait à la surprise
Tout aussitôt le demarqua."

CHAPTER XVIII

LESCAR, THE SEPULCHRE OF THE BÉARNAIS

The antique city of Beneharnum is lost in modern Lescar, though, indeed, Lescar is far from modern, for it is unprogressive with regard to many of those up-to-date innovations which city dwellers think necessary to their existence. Lescar was the religious capital of Béarn, and its bishops were, by inheritance, presidents of the Parliament and Seigneurs of their diocesan city.

Lescar is by turns gay and sad; it is gay enough on a Sunday or a fête day, and sad and diffident at all other times, save what animation may be found in its market-place. Architecture rises to no great height here, and, beyond the picturesque riot of moss-grown roof-tops and tottering walls, there is not much that is really remarkable of either Gothic or Renaissance days. The ancient cathedral, with a weird triangular façade, belongs to no school, not even a local one, and is unspeakably ugly as a whole, though here and there are gems

of architectural decoration which give it a certain fantastic distinction.

Lescar is but a league distant from Pau, but not many of those who winter in that delightful city ever come here. "The Normans razed it in 856, when it was rebuilt on the side of a hill in the midst of a wood." This was the old chronicler's description, and it holds good to-day. Usually travellers find the big cities like Pau or Tarbes so irresistible that they have no eye for the charm of the small town. The country-side they like, and the cities, and yet the dull, little, sleepy old-world towns whose names are never mentioned in the newspapers, and often nowhere but on the road maps of the automobilist, are possessed of many pleasing attributes for which one may look in vain in more populous places. Lescar has some of these, one of them being its Hôtel Uglas.

Lescar is a good brisk hour and a half's stroll from Pau, the classic constitutional recommended by the doctors to the semi-invalids who are so frequently met with at Pau, and is a humble, dull bourgade even to-day, sleepy, rustic, and unprogressive, and accordingly a delightful contrast to its ostentatious neighbour. Poor Lescar, its fall has been profound since the days when it was the Beneharnum of the

Romans. Its bishopric has been shredded into nonentity, and its ancient cathedral disfigured by interpolated banalities until one can hardly realize to-day that it was once a metropolitan church.

St. Denis, as the old cathedral of Lescar is named, was once the royal burial-place of Béarn, as was its namesake just outside of Paris the sepulchre of the kings of France. Here the Béarnais royalties who were kings and queens of Navarre came to their last long slumbers. Side by side lie the Centulles and the D'Albrets.

The cathedral sits upon a terrace formed of the ancient ramparts of the old city, and right here is the chief attraction and charm of Lascarris, "*la ville morte.*" Lascarris, as it was known before it became simply Lescar, was built up anew after the primitive city had been destroyed by the Saracens in 841.

This rampart terrace has one great architectural monument, formerly a part of the ancient fortress, a simple, severe tower in outline, but of most complicated construction, built up of bands of brick and stone in a regular building-block fashion, a caprice of some local builder. Through this tower one gains access to the cathedral, which shows plainly how the affairs of

church and state, and war and peace, were closely bound together in times past. This little brick and stone tower is the only remaining fragment of the fourteenth-century fortress-château known as the Fort de l'Esquirette.

Within the cathedral were formerly buried Jeanne d'Albret, Catherine de Navarre, Marguerite de Valois, and other Béarnais sovereigns, but no monuments to be seen there to-day antedate the seventeenth century, those of the Béarnais royalties having been destroyed either by the Calvinists or later revolutionists. Catherine of Béarn was buried here in the cathedral of Lescar in spite of her wish that she should be entombed at Pamplona beside the kings of Navarre.

The ceremony of the funeral of Marguerite de Navarre is described in detail in a document preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. It recounts that among those present were the kings of Navarre and France, the Duchesse d'Estonteville, the Duc de Montpensier, M. le Prince, the Duc de Nevers, the Duc d'Aumale, the Duc d'Étampes, the Marquis du Mayne, M. de Rohan and the Duc de Vendomois, with the Vicomte de Lavedan as the master of ceremony. As is still the custom in many places in the Pyrenees, there was a great feast-

ing on the day of the interment, the chief mourners eating apart from the rest.

Charles de Sainte-Marthe wrote the funeral eulogy, in Latin and French, and Ronsard, the prince of poets, wrote an ode entitled "Hymne Triomphale." Three nieces of Jane Seymour, wife of Henry VIII of England, composed four *distiques,* in Latin, Greek, Italian, and French, entitled "Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois, Reine de Navarre." Valentine d'Arsinois gave publicity to this work in the following words: "Musarum decima, et charitum quarta, inclyta regum et soror et conjux Margaris illa jacet."

This in French has been phrased thus:

"Sœur et femme de roys, la reine Marguerite
Des Muses la dixième et leur plus cher souci
Et la quatrième Charité
La reine du savoir gît sous ce marbre-ci."

Throughout the valley of the Gave d'Ossau, and from Lescar all the way to Lourdes on the Gave de Pau, the chief background peak in plain view is always the Pic du Midi d'Ossau. This the peasant of the neighbourhood knows by no other name than "*la montagne.*" "What mountain?" you ask, but his reply is simply "*Je ne sais pas — la montagne.*" It

should not be confounded with the Pic du Midi de Bigorre.

Between Pau and Lescar, lying just northward of the Gave, is the last vestige of an incipient desert region called to-day La Lande de Pont-Long. It now blossoms with more or less of the profusion which one identifies with a land of roses, but was formerly only a pasture ground for the herders of the Val d'Ossau, who, by a certain venturesome spirit, crossed the Gave de Pau at some period well anterior to the foundation of the city of Pau and thus established certain rights. It was these sheep and cattle raisers who ceded the site of the new city of Pau to the Vicomtes de Béarn.

Henri II de Navarre, grandfather of Henri IV, would have fenced off these Ossalois, but every time he made a tentative effort to build a wall around them they rose up in their might and tore it down again. In vain the Béarnais of the valley tried to preëmpt the rights of the *montagnards,* and willingly or not they perforce were obliged to have them for neighbours. This gave saying to the local diction "*En despicit deus de Pau, lou Pounloung ser sera d'Aussau.*

Intrigue, feudal warfare and oppression could do nothing towards recovering this pre-

empted land, and only a process of law, as late as 1837, finally adjudicated the matter, when the Ossalois were bound by judgment to give certain reciprocal rights in their high valleys to any of the lowland population who wanted to pasture their flocks in the mountains for a change of diet. It is a patent fact that the sheep of all the Midi of France thrive best in the lowlands in winter and in the mountains in summer. It is so in the Pyrenees and it is so in the Basses-Alpes, which in summer furnish pasturage for the sheep of the Crau and the Camargue, even though they have to march three hundred or more kilometres to arrive at it.

Closely allied with Lescar is the ancient capital of Béarn, Morlaas. After the destruction of Lescar by the Normans Morlaas became the residence of the Vicomtes de Béarn. Its history is as ancient and almost as important as that of its neighbour. The Romans here had a mint and stamped money out of the copper they took from the neighbouring hills. The Visigoths, the Franks, the Ducs de Gascogne and the Vicomtes de Béarn all held sway here for a time, and the last built a pretentious sort of an establishment, the first which the town had had which could be dignified with the name

of a palace. This palace was called La Fourquie and has since given its name to a hill outside the proper limits of the present town, still known as Vieille Fourquie.

Morlaas is a mere nonentity to-day, though it was the capital of Béarn from the time of the destruction of Lescar by the Saracens until the thirteenth century, when the vicomtes removed the seat of the government to Pau.

The town is practically one long, straight *grand rue,* with only short tributary arteries running in and from the sides. The Église Sainte Foy at Morlaas is a real antiquity, and was founded by Centulle, the fourth vicomte, in 1089.

There are still vestiges of the ancient ramparts of the city to be seen, and the great market held every fifteen days, on the Place de la Fourquie, is famous throughout Béarn. Altogether Morlaas should not be omitted from any neighbouring itinerary, and the local colour to be found on a market day at Morlaas' snug little Hôtel des Voyageurs will be a marvel to those who know only the life of the cities. Morlaas is one of the good things one occasionally stumbles upon off the beaten track; and it is not far off either; just a dozen kilometres or so northwest of Pau. Morlaas' importance

of old is further enhanced when one learns that the measure of Morlaas was the basis for the measure used in the wine trade of all Gascony, and the same is true of the *livre morlan,* and the *sou morlan,* which were the monetary units of Gascony and a part of Languedoc.

CHAPTER XIX

THE GAVE D'OSSAU

On ascending the Gave d'Ossau, all the way to Laruns and beyond, one is impressed by the beauty of the snow-crested peaks before them, unless by chance an exceptionally warm spell of weather has melted the snow, which is quite unlikely.

You can name every one of the peaks of the Pyrenees with the maps and plans of Joanne's Guide, but you will glean little specific information from the peasants en route, especially the women.

"*Attendez, monsieur, je vais demander à mon mari,*" said a buxom, lively-looking peasant woman when questioned at Laruns. Her "mari" came to the rescue as well as he was able. "*Ma foi, je ne sais pas trop,*" he replied, "*mais peut être . . . ;*" there was no use going any further; all he knew was that the mountains were the Pyrenees, and were the peaks high or low, to him they were always "les Pyrénées" or "*la montagne.*"

Not far from Pau, on mounting the Gave d'Ossau, is Gan, one of the thirteen ancient cities of Béarn. In a modest castle flanked by a tiny pepper-box tower Pierre de Marca, the historian of Béarn, first saw the light, some years after the birth of Henri IV.

A little further on, but hemmed in among the high mountains between the valley of the Ossau and the Pau, is a tiny bourg bearing the incongruous name of Bruges.

It is not a simple coincidence in name, with the well-known Belgium port, because the records show that this old feudal *bastide* was originally peopled by exiled Flemings, who gave to it the name of one of their most glorious cities. The details of this foreign implantation are not very precise. The little bourg enjoyed some special privileges, in the way of being immune from certain taxes, up to the Revolution. There are no architectural monuments of splendour to remark at Bruges, and its sole industries are the manufacture of *espadrilles,* or rope-soled shoes, and *chapelets,* the construction of these latter "objects of piety" being wholly in the hands of the women-folk.

Like many a little town of the Pyrenees, Laruns, in the Val d'Ossau, is a reminder of similar towns in the Savoian Alps-Barcelon-

Espadrille-makers

nette, for instance. They all have a certain grace and beauty, and are yet possessed of a hardy character which gives that distinction to a mountain town which one lying in the lowlands entirely lacks. Here the houses are trim and well-kept, even dainty, and the church spire and all the dependencies of the simple life of the inhabitants speak volumes for their health and freedom from the annoyances and cares of the big towns.

Laruns merits all this, and is moreover more gay and active than one might at first suppose of a little town of scarce fifteen hundred inhabitants. This is because it is a centre for the tourist traffic of Eaux-Bonnes and Eaux-Chaudes, not greatly higher up in the valley.

There are many quaint old Gothic houses with arched windows and doorways, and occasionally a curious old buttress, but all is so admirably kept and preserved that the whole looks like a newly furbished stage-setting. For a contrast there are some Renaissance house fronts of a later period, with here and there a statue-filled niche in the walls, and a lamp bracket which would be worth appropriating if that were the right thing to do.

There is a picturesqueness of costume among the women-folk of Laruns, too. They wear a

sort of white cap or bonnet, covered with a black embroidered fichu, and a coloured shawl and apron which gives them a holiday air every day in the week. When it comes Sunday or a fête-day they do the thing in a still more startling fashion. The coiffes and costumes of France are fast disappearing, but in the Pyrenees, and in Brittany, and in just a few places along some parts of the coast line bordering upon the Bay of Biscay, they may still be found in all their pristine quaintness.

The Fête Dieu procession (the Thursday after Trinity) at Laruns is an exceedingly picturesque and imposing celebration. Here in the pious cortège one sees more frequent exhibitions of the local costumes of the country than at any other time or place. The tiny girls and the older unmarried girls have all the picturesque colouring that brilliant neckerchiefs, fichus and foulards can give, with long braided tresses like those of Marguerite, except that here they are never golden, but always sable. The matrons are not far behind, but are more sedately clothed. The men have, to a large extent, abandoned the ancient costume of their forefathers, save the *béret* and a high-cut pantaloon, which replaces the vest. But for these two details one finds among the men a certain

family resemblance to a carpenter or a boiler maker of Paris out at Courbevoie for a happy Sunday.

The procession at the Fête Dieu at Laruns is very calm and dignified, but once it is dispersed, all thoughts of religion and devoutness are gone to the winds. Then commences the invariable dance, and they don't wait for night to begin. Most likely this is the first *Bal d'Été,* though usually this comes with Easter in France. The dance is the passion of the people of the Pays d'Ossau, but this occasion is purely a town affair, and you will not see a peasant or a herder from the countryside among all the throng of dancers. Their great day in town comes at quite another season of the year, in the autumn, in the summer of Saint Martin, which in America we know as the Indian summer.

On the highroad, not far from Laruns, is a great oak known locally as the "Arbre de l'Ours" because on more than one occasion in the past a bear or a whole family of them has treed many an unfortunate peasant travelling by this route. This may have been a danger once, but the bears have now all retreated further into the mountains. They are not by any means impossible to find, and not long since

one read in the local journal that three were killed, practically on the same spot, not far above Laruns, and that a sporting Russian prince had killed two within a week.

In the high valley of the Ossau the bear is still the national quadruped, and the arms of the district represent a cow struggling with a bear and the motto VIVA LA TACHA, which in French means simply VIVE LA VACHE.

Near Laruns is the little village of Louvie-Soubiron which takes its name from an ancient seigneurie of the neighbourhood. It has no artistic embellishments worthy of remark, but on this spot was quarried the stone from which were carved the symbolical statues of the great cities of France surrounding the Place de la Concorde at Paris.

The ancient capital of Ossau was Bielle, and up to the Revolution the assemblies of the ancient government were held here. It hardly looks its part to-day. The population is but seven hundred, and it is not even of the rank of a market-town. Traditions still persist, however, and delegates from all over the Pays d'Ossau meet here at least once a year to discuss such common interests as the safeguarding of forests and pastures. In a small chamber attached to the little parish church is preserved

the ancient coffer, or strong box, of the old Republic of Ossau. It is still fastened by three locks, the keys being in the possession of the mayors of Bielle, of Laruns, and of Saint Colome.

Ten kilometres from Laruns is Eaux-Bonnes. Their virtues have been known for ages. The Béarnais who so well played their parts at the ill-fated battle of Pavia were transported thither that they might benefit from these "waters of the arquebusade," as the generic name is known. A further development came under the leadership of a certain Comte de Castellane, préfet of the department under the great Napoleon. He indeed was the real exploiter, applying some of the ideas which had been put into practice in the German spas. He set to with a will and beautified the little town, laid out broad tree-lined avenues, and made a veritable little paradise of this rocky gorge. The little bourg is therefore to-day what the French describe as "*amiable,*" and nothing else describes it better. The town itself is dainty and charming enough, but mostly its architectural characteristics are of the villa order. The church is modern and everybody is "on the make."

It is not that the population are swindlers,

— far from it; but they have discovered that by exploiting tourists and "*malades imaginaires*" for three months in the year they can make as ample a living as by working at old-fashioned occupations for a twelvemonth. A sign on one house front tells you that a "Guide-Chasseur" lives there, and that he will take you on a bear hunt — *prix à forfait;* which means that if you don't get your bear you pay nothing to your guide; but you have given him a fine ten-days' excursion in the mountains, *at your expense* for his food and lodging nevertheless, beside which he has had the spending of your money for the camp equipment and supplies. He really would make a very good thing, even if you did not have to pay him a bonus for every bear sighted, not shot, mind you, for all the guide undertakes to do is to point out the bear, if he can.

Another very business-like sign may be seen at Eaux-Bonnes, — that of a transatlantic steamship company. They gather traffic, the steamship agents, even here in the fastnesses of the Pyrenees, and Amerique du Sud especially is still depopulating southern France.

Eaux-Chaudes is another neighbouring thermal station. As its name implies, it is a *source* of hot water, and was already famous in the

reign of Henri IV. The little community points out with pride that the archives record the fact that this monarch "took the waters here with much benefit."

The little Pyrenean village of Gabas lies high up the valley under the shelter of the Pic du Midi d'Ossau. It is not greatly known to fame; it is what the French call a hamlet with but a few chimneys. A late census gave it twenty-three inhabitants, but probably the most of these have departed in the last year or so to become *femmes de chambre* and *garçons de café* in the big towns.

The place is, however, very ancient, and was the outgrowth of a little settlement which surrounded a chapel built as early as 1121, and a sort of resting-house or hospital for pilgrims who passed this way in mediæval times. This establishment was known as Santa-Christina, and was consecrated to the pilgrims going and coming from Saint Jacques de Compostelle.

Plastered up recently on the wall of the mayor's office in the little village was a placard addressed to the "Messieurs d'Ossau," by the Conseiller d'Arrondissement. This singular form of address is a survival of the ancient constitution of this little village, which, in times past, when everything else round about was

feudal or monarchial, was sort of demi-republican. The " Messieurs d'Ossau " recognized no superior save the Prince of Béarn, and considered him only as a sort of a titular dignitary with no powers over them worth speaking of.

Here in the communes of Laruns and Arudy the peasants have certain rights of free pasture for their flocks and herds, a legacy which came originally through the generosity of Henri IV, and which no later rule of monarchy or republic has ever been able to assail. The " Messieurs d'Ossau " also had the ancient right of gathering about the same council table with the Vicomtes of Béarn when any discussion of the lands included in the territorial limits of Béarn was concerned.

CHAPTER XX

TARBES, BIGORRE AND LUCHON

There is a clean-cut, commercial-looking air to Tarbes, little in keeping with what one imagines the capital of the Hautes-Pyrénées to be. Local colour has mostly succumbed to twentieth-century innovations in the train of great hotels, tourists and clubs. In spite of this, the surrounding panorama is superb; the setting of Tarbes is delightful; and at times — but not for long at a time — it is really a charming town of the Midi. Tarbes possessed a château of rank long years ago; not of so high a rank as that of Pau, for that was royal, but still a grand and dignified château, worthy of the seigneurs who inhabited it. Raymond I fortified the place in the tenth century, and all through the following five hundred years life here was carried on with a certain courtly splendour. To-day the château, or what is left of it, serves as a prison.

The unlovely cathedral at Tarbes was once a citadel, or at least served as such. It must have

been more successful as a warlike accessory than as a religious shrine, for it is about the most ungracious, unchurchly thing to be seen in the entire round of the Pyrenees.

The chief architectural curiosity of Tarbes is the Lycée, on whose portal (dated 1669) one reads: "May this building endure until the ant has drunk the waters of the ocean, and the tortoise made the tour of the globe." It seems a good enough dedication for any building.

The ever useful Froissart furnishes a reference to Tarbes and its inns which is most apropos. Travellers even in those days, unless they were noble courtiers, repaired to an inn as now.

The Messire Espaing de Lyon, and the Maître Jehan Froissart made many journeys together. It was here under the shelter of the Pyrenees that the maître said to his companion:

"Et nous vînmes à Tarbes, et nous fûmes tout aises à l'hostel de l'Etoile. . . . C'est une ville trop bien aisée pour séjourner chevaux: de bons foins, de bons avoines et de belles rivières."

Tarbes is something of an approach to this, but not altogether. The missing link is the Hostel de l'Étoile, and apparently nothing exists which takes the place of it. From the four-

teenth century to the twentieth century is a long time to wait for hotel improvements, particularly if they have not yet arrived.

The great Marché de Tarbes is, and has been for ages, one of its chief sights, indeed it is the rather commonplace modern city's principal picturesque accessory, if one excepts its grandly scenic background. Every fifteen days throughout the year the market draws throngs of buyers and sellers from the whole region of the western Pyrenees.

In the very midst of the most populous and wealthy valleys and plains of the Pyrenees, one sees here the complete gamut of picturesque peoples and costumes in which the country abounds. Here are the Béarnais, agile and gay, and possessed of the very spirit associated with Henri IV. They seat themselves among their wares, composed of woollen stuffs and threads, pickled meats, truffles, potatoes, cheeses of all sorts, agricultural implements — mostly primitive, but with here and there a gaudy South Bend or Milwaukee plough — porcelain, coppers, cattle, goats, sheep and donkeys, and a greater variety of things than one's imagination can suggest. It is almost the liveliest and most populous market to be seen in France to-day. The gaudy umbrellas and tents cover

the square like great mushrooms. There are much picturesqueness and colour, and lively comings and goings too. This is ever a contradiction to the reproach of laziness usually applied to the care-free folk of the Midi.

In olden times the market of Tarbes was the resort of many Spanish merchants, and they still may be distinguished as donkey-dealers and mule traders, but the chief occupants of the stalls and little squares of ground are the dwellers of the countryside, who think nothing of coming in and out a matter of four or five leagues to trade a side of bacon — which they call simply *salé* — for a sheep or a goat, or a sheep or a goat for a nickel clock, made in Connecticut. It's as hard for the peasant to draw the line between necessities and superfluities as it is for the rest of us, and he is often apt to put caprice before need.

Neighbouring close upon Tarbes is the ancient feudal bourg of Ossun, which most of the fox-hunters of Pau, or the pilgrims of Lourdes, know not even by name. It's only the traveller by road — the omnipresent automobilist of to-day — who really stands a chance of "discovering" anything. The art of travel degenerated sadly with the advent of the railway and the "personally conducted pilgrimage,"

but the automobile is bringing it all back again. The bicycle stood a chance of participating in the same honour at one time, but folk weren't really willing to take the trouble of becoming a vagabond on wheels.

Ossun was the site of a Roman camp before it became a feudal stronghold, and with the coming of the château and its seigneurs, in the fifteenth century, it came to a prominence and distinction which made of it nearly a metropolis. To-day it is a dull little town of less than two thousand souls, but with a most excellent hotel, the Galbar, which is far and away better (to some of us) than the popular hotels of Pau, Tarbes or Luchon.

The château of Ossun, or so much of it as remains, was practically a fortress. What it lacks in luxury it makes up for in its intimation of strength and power, and from this it is not difficult to estimate its feudal importance.

The Roman camp, whose outlines are readily defined, was built, so history tells, by one Crassus, a lieutenant of Cæsar. It was an extensive and magnificent work, a long, sunken, oblong pit with four entrances passing through the sloping dirt walls. Four or five thousand men, practically a Roman legion, could be quartered within.

It was from the Château d'Odos, near Tarbes, in the month of December, 1549, that the Queen of Navarre observed the comet which was said to have made its appearance because of the death of Pope Paul III. Says Brantome: "She jumped from her bed in fright at observing this celestial phenomenon, and presumably lingered too long in the chill night, for she caught a congestion which brought about her death eight days later, 21st December, 1549, in the fifty-eighth year of her age." According to Hilarion de Coste her remains were transported to Pau, and interred in the "*principal église,*" but others, to the contrary, say that she was buried in the great burial vault at Lescar. This is more likely, for an authentic document in the Bibliothèque Nationale describes minutely the details of the ceremony of burial "*dans l'antique cathédrale de Lescar.*"

On the Landes des Maures, near by, was celebrated a bloody battle in the eighth century between the Saracens and the inhabitants of the country. Gruesome finds of "skulls of extraordinary thickness" have frequently been made on this battlefield. Just what this description seems to augur the writer does not know; perhaps some ethnologist who reads these lines

A Shepherd of Bigorre

will. At any rate the combatants must have died *hard*.

Following up the valley of the Adour one comes to the Bagnères de Bigorre in a matter of twenty-five kilometres or so. Bagnères de Bigorre is a hodge-podge of a name, but it is the "Bath" of France, as an Englishman of a century ago called it. There are other resorts more popular and fashionable and more wickedly immoral, such as Vichy, Aix les Bains and even Luchon, but still Bigorre remains the first choice. From the times of the Romans, throngs have been coming to this charming little spot of the Pyrenees where the mineral waters bubble up out of the rock, bringing health and strength to those ill in mind and body. Pleasure seekers are here, too, but primarily it is the baths which attract.

There are practically no monuments of bygone days here, but fragmentary relics of one sort or another tell the story of the waters from Roman times to the present with scarcely a break.

Arreau, seven leagues from Bigorre, towards the heart of the Pyrenees, through the Val d'Arreau, certainly one of the most picturesquely unspoiled places in all the Pyrenees, is a relic of mediævalism such as will hardly

be found elsewhere in the whole chain of mountains from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. Its feudal history was fairly important, but its monuments of the period, save its churches and its market house or "Halle," have practically disappeared. Whatever defences there may have been, have been built into the town's fine stone houses and bridges, but the Roman tower of St. Exupère, and the primitive church now covered by Notre Dame show its architectural importance in the past.

By reason of being one of the gateways through the Pyrenees into Spain (by the valley of the Arreau and the *portes,* so called, of Plan and Vielsa) Arreau enjoys a Franco-Espagnol manner of living which is quaint beyond words. It is the nearest thing to Andorra itself to be found on French soil.

Luchon is situated in a nook of the Larboust surrounded with a rural beauty only lent by a river valley and a mountain background. The range to the north is bare and grim, but to the southward is thickly wooded, with little eagles'-nest villages perched here and there on its flanks and peaks, in a manner which leads one to believe that this part of the Pyrenees is as thickly peopled as Switzerland, where peasants fall out of their terrace gardens only to

tumble into those of a neighbour living lower down the mountain-side.

The surroundings of Luchon are indeed sublime, from every point of view, and one's imagination needs no urging to appreciate the sentiment which is supposed to endow a "nature-poet." Yes, Luchon *is* beautiful, but it is overrun with fashionables from all over the world, and is as gay as Biarritz or Nice. "*La grande vie mondaine*" is the key-note of it all, and if one could find out just when was the off-season it would be delightful. Of late it has been crowded throughout the year, though the height of fashion comes in the spring. Outside of its sulphur springs the great world of fashion comes here to dine and wine their friends and play bridge.

Luchon has a history though. As a bathing or a drinking place it was known to the Romans as *Onesiorum Thermæ* and was mentioned by Strabo as being famous in those days.

There were many pagan altars and temples here erected to the god Ilixion, which by evolution into Luchon came to be the name by which the place has latterly been known.

In 1036, by marriage, Luchon was transferred from the house of Comminges to that of Aragon, but later was returned to the Comtes

de Comminges and finally united with France in 1458 under Charles VII, retaining, however, numerous ancient privileges which endured until the end of the seventeenth century.

This was the early history of Luchon. Its later history began when, in 1754, the local waters were specially analyzed and a boom given to a project to make of the place a great spa.

The city itself is the proprietor of all the springs and its administrative sagacity has been such that fifty thousand visitors are attracted here within the year.

CHAPTER XXI

BY THE BLUE GAVE DE PAU

The Gave de Pau, a swiftly-flowing stream which comes down from its icy cradle in the Cirque de Gavarnie and joins with the Adour near Bayonne's port, winds its way through a gentle, smiling valley filled with gracious vistas, historic sites and grand mountain backgrounds.

Next to the æsthetic aspects of the Gave de Pau are its washhouses. The writer in years of French travel does not remember to have seen a stream possessed of so many.

One sees similar arrangements for washing clothes all over France, but here they are exceedingly picturesque in their disposition, and the workers therein are not of the Zola-Amazon type, nor of the withered beldam class. How much better they wash than others of their fraternity elsewhere is not to be remarked.

There are municipal washhouses in some of the larger towns of France, great, ugly, brick,

cement and iron structures, but as the actual washing is done after the same manner as when carried on by the banks of a rushing river or a purling brook there is not much to be said in their favour that cannot as well be applied to the washhouses of Pau, Oloron or Orthez in Navarre, and artist folk will prefer the latter.

Coarraze, twenty kilometres above Pau, on the banks of the Gave, is a populous centre where the hum of industry, induced by the weavers who make the *toile du Béarn,* is the prevailing note. *Toile du Béarn* and *chapelets* are the chief output of this little bourg, and many francs are in circulation here each Saturday night that would probably be wanting except for these indefatigable workers who had rather bend over greasy machines at something more than a living wage, than dig a mere existence out of the ground.

The little bourg is dull and gray in colour, only its surroundings being brilliant. Its situation is most fortunate. Opposite is a great tree-covered plateau, a veritable terrace, on which is a modern château replacing another which has disappeared — *" comme un chevreau en liberté,"* says the native.

It was in this old Château de Coarraze that the youthful Henri IV was brought up by an

Château de Coarraze

aunt, *en paysan,* as the simple life was then called. Perhaps it was this early training that gave him his later ruggedness and rude health.

The château has been called royal, and its construction has been attributed to Henri IV, but this is manifestly not so. Only ruined walls and ramparts, and the accredited facts of history, remain to-day to connect Henri IV with the spot.

The château virtually disappeared in a revolutionary fury, and only the outline of its former walls remains here and there. A more modern structure, greatly resembling the château at Pau, practically marks the site of the former establishment endowed with the memory of Henri IV's boyhood.

Froissart recounts a pleasant history of the Château de Coarraze and its seigneur. A certain Raymond of Béarn had acquired a considerable heritage, which was disputed by a Catalan, who demanded a division. Raymond refused, but the Catalan, to intimidate his adversary, threatened to have him excommunicated by the Pope. Threats were of no avail, and Raymond held to his legacy as most heirs do under similar claims. One night some one knocked loudly at Raymond's door.

"Who is there?" he cried in a trembling voice.

"I am Orthon, and I come on behalf of the Catalan."

After a parley he left, nothing accomplished, but returned night after night in some strange form of man or beast or wraith or spook or masquerader and so annoyed Raymond that he was driven into madness, the Catalan finally coming to his own.

At Nay, Gaston Phœbus is said to have built a sort of modest country house which in later centuries became known simply as La Maison Carrée. Perhaps Gaston Phœbus built it, and perhaps he did not, for its architecture is of a very late Renaissance. At any rate it has a charming triple-galleried house-front, quite in keeping with the spirit of mediævalism which one associates with a builder who has "ideas" and is not afraid of carrying them out, and this was Gaston's reputation. The house is on record as having one day been occupied by the queen of Navarre, Jeanne d'Albret.

Just beyond Coarraze is Betharrem whose "Calvary" and church are celebrated throughout the Midi. From the fifteenth of August to the eighth of September it is a famous place of pilgrimage for the faithful of Béarn and

Bigorre, a veritable New Jerusalem. Its foundation goes back to antiquity, but its origin is not unknown, if legend plays any part in truthful description.

One day, too far back to give a date, a young and pious maiden fell precipitately into the Gave. She could not swim and was sinking in the waters, when she called for the protection of the Virgin Mary. At that moment a tree trunk, leaning out over the river, gave way and fell into the waters; the maiden was able to grasp it and keep afloat, and within a short space was drifted ashore. There is nothing very unplausible about this, nothing at all miraculous; and so it may well be accepted as a legend based on truth.

A modest chapel was built near at hand, by some pious folk, to commemorate the event, or perhaps it was built — as has been claimed — by Gaston IV himself, on his return from the Crusades in the middle of the twelfth century. The latter supposition holds good from the fact that the place bears the name of the city by the Jordan.

Montgomery burned the chapel during the religious wars, but again in the seventeenth century, Hubert Charpentier, *licencié* of the Sorbonne, came here and declared that the con-

figuration of the mountain resembled that where took place the crucifixion, and accordingly erected a Calvary dedicated to "Our Lady," "in order," as he said, "to revivify the faith which Calvinism had nearly extinguished."

Saint-Pé-de-Bigorre, lying midway between Pau and Lourdes, is an ideally situated, typical small town of France. It is not a resort in any sense of the word, but might well be, for it is as delightful as any Pyrenean "station" yet "boomed" as a cure for the ills of folk with imaginations.

It is a genuine garden-city. Its houses, strung out along the banks of the Gave, are wall-surrounded and tree-shaded, nearly every one of them. But one hotel extends hospitality at Saint Pé to-day, but soon there will be a dozen, no doubt, and then Saint Pé will be known as a centre where one may find "*all the attractions of the most celebrated watering-places.*"

To-day Saint Pé depends upon its ravishing site and its historic past for its reason for being. It derives its name from the old Abbey of Saint-Pé-de-Générès (Sanctus Petrus de Generoso), founded here in the eleventh century, by Sanchez-Guillaume, Duc de Gascogne, in commemoration of a victory. This monas-

tery, with its abbatial church, was razed during the religious wars by the alien Montgomery who outdid in these parts even his hitherto unenviable cruelties. The church was built up anew, from such of its stones as were left, into the present edifice which serves the parish, but nothing more than the tower and the apse are of the original structure.

To Lourdes is but a dozen kilometres by road or rail from Saint Pé. In either case one follows along the banks of the Gave with delightful vistas of hill and dale at every turn, and always that blue-purple curtain of mountains for a background.

Lourdes is perhaps the most celebrated, if not the most efficacious, pilgrim-shrine in all the world. It's a thing to see, if only to remark the contrasting French types among the pilgrims that one meets there — the Breton from Pont Aven or Quimperlé, the Norman from the Pays de Caux, the Parisian, the Alsaçien, the Niçois and the Tourangeau. All are here, in all stages of health and sickness, vigorous and crippled. The shrine of "Our Lady of Lourdes" is all things to all men. Lourdes is a beastly, unclean, and uncomfortable place in which to linger, in spite of its magnificent

situation, and its great and small hotels with all manner of twentieth-century conveniences.

It's a plague-spot on fair France, looking at it from one point of view; and a living superstition of Christendom from another. The medical men of France want to close it up; the churchmen and hotel keepers want to keep it open. Arguments are puerile, so there the matter stands; and neither side has gained an appreciable advantage over the other as yet.

Lourdes was one day the capital of the ancient seigneurie, Lavedan-en-Bigorre, and at that time bore the name of Mirambel, which in the *patois* of the region signified beautiful view. Originally it was but a tiny village seated at the foot of a rock, and crowned by the same château which exists to-day, and which in its evolution has come down from a *castellum-romain,* a Carlovingian bastille, a Capetian and English prison of state, a hospital for the military, a barracks, to finally being a musée.

Of the château of the feudal epoch nothing remains save two covered ways, the donjon, a sixteenth-century gate and a drawbridge, this latter probably restored out of all semblance to its former outlines. One of these covered ways gave access to the upper stages with so ample a sweep that it became practically a horse stair-

way upon which cavaliers and lords and ladies reined their chargers.

The donjon is manifestly a near relation to that of Gaston Phœbus at Foix, though that prince had no connection with the château. Transformation has changed all but its outlines, its fosse has become a mere sub-cellar, and its windows have lost their original proportions.

The Château de Lourdes was undoubtedly a good defence in its day in spite of its present attenuated appearance. In 1373 it resisted the troops of Charles V, commanded by the Duc d'Anjou. Under the ancient French monarchy its career was most momentous, though indeed merely as a prison of state, or a house of detention for political suspects. Many were the *"lettres de cachet"* that brought an unwilling prisoner to be caged here in the shadow of the Pyrenees, as if imbedded in the granite of the mountains themselves.

The rock which supports the château rises a hundred metres or so above the Gave. A great square mass — the donjon — forms the principal attribute, and was formerly the house of the governor. This donjon with a chapel and a barracks has practically made up the ensemble in later years.

Here, on one of the counterforts of the Pyrenees, just beyond the grim old château, and directly before the celebrated Pic du Ger, now desecrated by a cog-railway, where the seven plains of Lavedan blend into the first slopes of the mountains, were laid the first stones of the Basilique de Lourdes in 1857.

Previously the site was nothing more than a moss-grown grotto where trickled a fountain that, for ages, had been the hope of the incurably ill, who thought if they bathed and drank and prayed that miracles would come to them and they would be made whole again.

The fact that the primitive, devout significance of this sentiment has degenerated into the mere pleasure seeking of a mixed rabble does not affect in the least the simple faith of other days. The devout and prayerful still come to bathe and pray, but they are lost in the throng of indiscriminately "conducted" and "non-conducted" tourists who make of the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes a mere guide-book sight to be checked off the list with others, such as the Bridge of Sighs, the Pyramids of Gizeh, the Tour Eiffel, or Hampton Court, — places which once seen will never again be visited.

To-day only the smaller part of the visitors,

among even the French themselves, excepting the truly devout, who are mostly Bretons — will reply to the question as to whether they believe in Lourdes: *" Oui, comme un article de foi."*

No further homily shall be made, save to say that the general aspect of the site is one of the most picturesque and enchanting of any in the Pyrenees — when one forgets, or eliminates, the signs advertising proprietary condiments and breakfast foods.

It doesn't matter in the least whether one Frenchman says: *" C'est ma Foi; "* or another *" C'est un scandale; "* the landscape is gloriously beautiful. Of the Grotto itself one can only remark that its present-day garnishings are blatant, garish and offensive. The great, slim basilica rises on its monticule as was planned. It has been amply endowed and extravagantly built. Before it is a *perron,* or more properly a *scala-sancta,* and the whole is so theatrically disposed, with a great square before it, that one can quite believe it all a stage-setting and nothing more.

As a place of pilgrimage, Lourdes is perhaps the most popular in all the world, certainly it comes close after Jerusalem and Rome.

Alphonse XIII, the present ruler of Spain, made his devotions here in August, 1905.

Argelès is practically a resort, and has the disposition of a Normandy village; that is, its houses are set about with trees and growing verdure of all sorts. For this reason it is a delightful garden city of the first rank.

Argelès' chief attraction is its site; there are no monuments worth mentioning, and these are practically ruins. Argelès is a watering-place pure and simple, with great hotels and many of them, and prices accordingly.

Above Argelès the Gave divides, that portion to the left taking the name of Gave de Cauterets, while that to the right still retains the name of Gave de Pau.

Cauterets has, in late years, become a great resort, due entirely to its waters and the attendant attractions which have grouped themselves around its *établissement*. The beneficial effect of the drinking or bathing in medicinal waters might be supposed to be somewhat negatived by bridge and baccarat, poker and "*petits chevaux*" but these distractions — and some others — seem to be the usual accompaniments of a French or German spa.

"*C'est le premier jour de septembre que les bains des Pyrénées commencent à avoir de la*

Cauterets

vertu." Thus begins the prologue to Marguerite de Navarre's "Heptameron." The "season" to-day is not so late, but the queen of Navarre wrote of her own experiences and times, and it is to be presumed she wrote truly.

A half a century ago Cauterets was a dirty, shabby village, nearly unknown, but the exploiter of resorts got hold of it, and with a few medical endorsements forthwith made it the vogue until now it is as trim and well-laid-out a little town as one will find.

The town is a gem of daintiness, in strong contrast to the surrounding melancholy rocks and forests of the mountainside. Peaks, approximating ten thousand feet in height, rise on all sides, and dominate the more gentle slopes and valleys, but still the general effect is one of a savage wildness, with which the little white houses of the town, the electric lights and the innumerable hotels — a round score of them — comport little. Certainly the beneficial effects accruing to semi-invalids here might be supposed to be great — if they would but leave "the game" alone.

A simple mule path leads to the Col de Riou back of Cauterets, though it is more frequented by tourists on foot than by beasts of burden.

Here on the Col itself, in plain view of the

Pic du Midi and its sister peaks, the Touring Club has erected one of those admirable guide-book accessories, a *" table d'orientation."*

On its marbled circumference are traced nearly three hundred topographical features of the surrounding landscape, and a study of this well-thought-out affair is most interesting to any traveller with a thought above a table d'hôte. Throughout the region of the Pyrenees these circular *" tables d'orientation,"* with the marked outlines of all the surrounding landscape, are to be found on many vantage grounds. The principal ones are: —

On the Ramparts of the Château de Pau.
The Col d'Aspin.
The Col de Riou.
Platform of the Tour Massey at Tarbes.
Platform de Mouguerre.
Summit of the Pic du Midi.
Summit of the Cabaliros.
Summit of the Canigou.

Over the Col de Riou and down into the Gave de Pau again, and one comes to Luz. Luz is curiously and delightfully situated in a triangular basin formed by the water-courses of the Gave de Pau and the Gave de Barèges. Practically Luz is a *ville ancienne* and a *ville moderne,* the older portion being by far the most

interesting, though there is no squalor or unusual picturesqueness. Civic improvements have straightened out crooked streets and razed tottering house fronts and thus spoiled the picture of mediævalism such as artists — and most others — love.

A ruined fortress rises on a neighbouring hill-top which gives a note of feudal times, but the general aspect of Luz, and its neighbouring pretty suburb of St. Sauveur, each of them possessed of thermal establishments, are resorts pure and simple, which, indeed, both these places were bound to become, being on the direct route between Pau and Tarbes and Gavarnie, and neighbours of Cauterets and Barèges.

Barèges lies just eastward of Luz on a good carriage road. Like Bagnères-de-Bigorre, it is an oddly named town which depends chiefly upon the fact that it is a celebrated thermal station for its fame. It sits thirteen hundred metres above the sea, and while bright and smiling and gracious in summer, in winter it is as stern-visaged as a harpy, and about as unrelenting towards one's comfort. Only this last winter the mountain winds and snows caved in Barèges' Casino and a score of houses, killing several persons. There is no such a

storm-centre in the Pyrenees. Barèges has got a record no one will envy, though the efficacy of its waters makes them worthy rivals of those of Bigorre and Cauterets.

The fame of Barèges' waters goes back to the days of the young Duc du Maine, who came here with Madame de Maintenon, in 1667, on the orders of the doctor of the king. In 1760 a military hospital was founded here to receive the wounded of the Seven Years War.

Barèges is one of the best centres for mountain excursions in the Pyrenees. The town itself is hideous, but the surroundings are magnificent.

Above Saint Sauveur, Luz and Cauterets, in the valley of the Gaube, rises the majestic Vignemale, whose extreme point, the Pic Longue, reaches a height of three thousand, two hundred and ninety-eight metres, which is the greatest height of the French Pyrenees. In the year 1808, on the occasion of the coming of the Queen of Holland, spouse of Louis Bonaparte, to the Bains de Saint Sauveur, an unknown muse of poesy sang the praise of this great mountain as follows: —

« Roi des Monts: Despote intraitable.
Toi qui domine dans les airs,
Toi dont le trône inabordable

Appelle et fixe les éclairs!
Fier Vignemale, en vain ta cime
S'entoure d'un affreux abime
De niège et de débris pierreux;
Une nouvelle Bérénice
Ose, à côte du précipice,
Gravir sur ton front sourcilleux!"

Each of the thermal stations in these parts possesses its own special peak of the Pyrenees. Luchon has the Nethou; Bigorre the Pic du Midi de Bagnères; Eaux-Bonnes the Balaitous; Eaux-Chaudes the Pic du Midi d'Ossau; Vernet the Canigou and Saint Sauveur and Cauterets the Vignemale.

The Vignemale, composed of four peaks, each of them overreaching three thousand, two hundred metres, encloses a veritable river of ice. Its profound crevasses and its *Mer de Glace* remind one of the Alps more than do the accessories of any other peak of the Pyrenees.

The ascension of the Vignemale, from Cauterets or Luz, is the classic mountain climb of the Pyrenees. No peak is more easy of access, and none gives so complete an idea of the ample ranges of the Pyrenees, from east to west, or north to south.

CHAPTER XXII

OLORON AND THE VAL D'ASPE

Oloron, at the confluence of the Gave d'Ossau and the Gave d'Aspe, has existed since Roman times, when it was known as Iluro, finally changing to Oloro and Olero. It was sacked by the Saracens in 732, and later entirely ruined by the Normans. Centulle, Vicomte de Béarn, reëstablished the city, and for a time made it his residence.

The roads and lanes and paths of the neighbourhood of Oloron offer some of the most charming promenades of the region, but one must go on foot or on donkey-back (the latter at a cost of five francs a day) to discover all their beauties. The highroads of the Pyrenees are a speedy and a short means of communication between two points, but the delicate charm of the region is only discovered by following the by-roads, quite away from the beaten track.

Oloron will some day be an artists' resort, but it hasn't been exploited as such yet. It sits delightfully on the banks of the two Gaves,

and has all the picturesqueness that old tumble-down Gothic and Renaissance houses and bridges can suggest, the whole surrounded with a verdure and a rocky setting which is "all things to all (painter) men."

In reality Oloron is a triple city, each quite distinct from one another: Sainte-Marie, the episcopal city, with the cathedral and the bishop's palace; Sainte-Croix, the old feudal bourg; and the Quartier Neuve, the quarter of the railway station, the warehouses and all the smug commercialism which has spoiled many a fair landscape elsewhere.

The feudal Sainte-Croix has character; the episcopal Sainte-Marie dignity. In Sainte-Croix the houses rise up from the surface of the Gave in the most entrancing, damp picturesqueness imaginable as the waters flow swiftly down towards Orthez. Back from the river, the houses are mounted on tortuous hillsides, with narrow, silent streets, as if they and their inhabitants all lived in the past. On the very crest of the hill is the Église Sainte-Croix, founded in the ninth century by one of the Vicomtes de Béarn, a monument every whit as interesting as the great cathedral lower down.

The diocese of Saint-Marie d'Oloron was the least wealthy of any of mediæval France. Its

government allowance was but thirteen thousand francs, and this sum had to be divided with the Bishop of Lescar. On the other hand, the city of Oloron itself was important and wealthy in its own right.

In the Faubourg of Sainte-Croix one remarks as real a mediævalism as exists anywhere in France to-day. Its streets are narrow and silent, and therein are found many examples of domestic habitations dating back to Roman times. These are very rare to-day, even in southern Gaul, where the hand of progress is supposed to be weak. Interspersed with these Romanesque houses are admirable works of the Gothic and Renaissance periods. There is very little that is modern.

Of the old city walls but little evidence remains. A kind of rampart is seen here and there built into other structures, and one, at least, of the watch-towers is left, of the dozen or more that once existed. Sainte-Croix still has, however, an archaic aspect which bids fair not to change within the lives of the present generation.

The chief industries of Oloron are the making of *espadrilles,* and the weaving of "toile du Béarn," a species of linen with which housewives all over these parts stock their linen clos-

ets once in a lifetime, and which lasts till they die, or perhaps longer, and is handed down to their daughters and granddaughters.

Another echo of Protestantism in Béarn still reverberates at Oloron. A one-time Bishop of Oloron, a protégé of Marguerite de Navarre, became a disciple of Martin Luther. He was named Roussel, and had been a professor of philosophy in the University of Paris. He had travelled in Germany, had met Luther, and had all but accepted his religion, when, returning to Béarn, he came into favour with the learned Marguerite, who nominated him Bishop of Oloron. He hesitated between the two religions, knowing not which to take. Meantime he professed both one and the other; in the morning he was for Rome, and in the evening for Luther; and preaching thus in the churches and temples he became a natural enemy of both parties. One day he was summarily despatched by a blow with a hatchet which one of his parishioners had concealed upon his person as he came to church. For this act the murderer was, in the reign of Henri IV, made Bishop of Oloron in the unworthy Roussel's place.

Six kilometres from Oloron, at Eysus, a tiny hamlet too small to be noted in most guide

books, is an old *Château de Plaisance* of the Vicomtes de Béarn. Folks had the habit, even in the old days, of living around wherever fancy willed — the same as some of us do to-day. It has some advantages and not many disadvantages.

Back of Oloron, towards the foot-hills of the Pyrenees, is another of those little kingdoms which were scattered all over France, and which only geographers and antiquarians know sufficiently well to be able to place offhand. This is the Barétous, and very curious it is with the survival of its old customs and costumes. Up to Aramits the routes are much frequented, but as one penetrates further into the fastnesses of the mountains, there is an immense sadness that is as entrancing as the most vivid gaiety. Pushing through to the Spanish frontier, fifty kilometres or more beyond Aramits, a whole kaleidoscope of mountain charms unrolls itself at every step.

At the Spanish frontier limit, a quaint and curious ceremony is held on the thirteenth of July in each year by the Baretains and their Spanish neighbours. The Baretains, by an ancient right, pasture their flocks up in the high valleys of the Ronçal, and, to recognize the right of the Ronçalois to keep them out of their

pasturage if they so chose, the Baretains pay them homage. The ceremony is carried out before a notary, seven *jurats* being the representatives of the Baretains, each armed with a pike, as are the representatives of Ronçal. The first lay down their pikes before the latter, and, in a second layer, their points turned towards the Béarnais capital, are placed those of the Ronçalois. Then a shout of acclamation goes up and rends the air: "Patz abantz! Patz abantz! Patz abantz! — Peace for the future!" This is the signal for a general rejoicing, and a merry-making of dancing and eating and drinking, not far different from other fêtes. It is the setting that makes it so remarkable, and the quaint costumes and customs of the men and women of two nations mingling in a common fête.

This Franco-Espagnol ceremony is accomplished with much éclat on a little square of ground set off on the maps of the État Major as "Champ de Foire Français et Espagnol." Tradition demands that three cows be given or offered to the Spanish by the French for the privilege of pasturage over the border in the Spanish valleys. The cows are loosed on the *Champ de Foire,* and if they remain for half an hour without crossing the line into France

again they belong to the Spanish. If, on the other hand, one or more cross back into France they remain the property of the French.

Formerly three horses were used for this part of the function, but as they were bound to have a white star on the forehead, and as that variety of beast is rare in these parts, a compromise was made to carry out the pact with the cows.

The most historic spot in the Gave d'Aspe is unquestionably Sarrance. Notre Dame de Sarrance is a venerable and supposedly miraculous statue. Numbers of pilgrims have visited the shrine in times past, among them the none too constant Louis XI, who, if he was devoted to Our Lady of Cléry and Notre Dame de Embrun, was ready to bow down before any whom he thought might do him a good turn.

Certainly Sarrance's most favourite memory is that of the celebrated Marguerite de Navarre. If she did not write, she at least conceived the idea of her "Heptameron" here, if history is to be believed.

The title page of this immortal work reads as follows,

L'HEPTAMERON

"des nouvelles de très illustré et très excellente princesse, Marguerite de Valois, Reine de Navarre."

The history of the inception of these tales is often inexactly recounted at this late day, but in the main the facts seem to be as follows: —

In September (1549?), when the queen and her followers were journeying from Cauterets to Tarbes, the waters of the Gave overflowed their banks and destroyed the bridge of Sarrance. The party stopped first at the Abbaye de Saint Savin, and again at the Monastère de Notre Dame de Sarrance. Ten days were necessary to repair the bridge which had been carried away, and time apparently hung heavy on the hands of every one. To break the ennui of their sojourn in the company of these austere monks of Sarrance, the royal party sought what amusements they might.

In the morning all met with the Dame Oysille, the eldest of the company, when they had an hour's reading of the Scriptures. After this there was a mass; then at ten o'clock they dined; finally each retired to his room — "*pour ses affaires particulières,*" says the old record — presumably to sleep, though it was early in the day for that. In the afternoon ("*depuis midi jusques à quatres heures,*" ran the old chronicle) they all assembled in the meadow by the river's bank beneath the trees, and each, seated at his ease, recounted such salacious sat-

ires and tales as would have added to the fame of Boccaccio. This procedure went on until the tellers of tales were interrupted by the coming of the prior who called them to vespers.

These tales or "*contes,*" or "*petites histoires,*" or whatever one chooses to call them, free of speech and of incident as was the custom of the time, were afterwards mothered by the queen of Navarre, and given to the world as the product of her fertile mind. Judging from their popularity at that time, and since, the fair lady must have been a wonderful story-teller.

The gentle slopes of a prairie along the banks of the Gave near by is the reputed spot where these tales were told, — a spot "where the sun could not pierce the thick foliage," certainly romantically and picturesquely endowed. The site is charming, and one can picture the scene all out again for himself if he is possessed of the least bit of imaginative sense.

Still following the valley of the Aspe upward, one comes next to Bedous, really a pretentious little city, but unheard of by conventional travellers. Everything begins to take on a Spanish hue, and the church, dating from 1631, is more Spanish than French in its architecture and all its appointments. All the commercial life

of the valley centres here, and a mixed Franco-Espagnol traffic goes on. It is principally the trading of cattle, sheep and wool, with an occasional porker or a donkey sold, or bargained for, on the side. Bedous has been marked out as being the terminus of a railway line yet to be built. Until the times shall be propitious for pushing the railway on into Spain the town will remain simply what it has been for centuries. When that day comes, much of the charm of the region will be gone. The automobile is no such desecrator as the railway, let scoffers say what they will.

In the valley of the Aspe, with snow-capped mountains in full view, there is a surprising softness of climate all through the year. In this valley was the last refuge of Protestantism in the days of the religious wars, and the little village of Bedous still possesses a " temple " and a " pastor."

Above Bedous, towards the crest of the Pyrenees, is Accous, and as one progresses things become more and more Spanish, until the sign " *Posada* " is as frequent as " *Auberge.*"

Accous offers no curiosities to visitors, but it was here that Victor Hugo gave the last glimpses of Jean Valjean when the police were close upon his trail; " at the place called the

Grange de Doumec, near the hamlet of Chavilles,'' ran the romance.

From this point the valley of the Aspe opens almost perpendicularly into the heart of the rock wall of the Pyrenees; it is a veritable chasm in its upper reaches; and in this rocky defile was once a tiny feudality, absorbed and later wiped into oblivion by the Revolution.

Beyond Sarrance are Urdos and Somport and the fortress of Portalet. The route was known to the ancients as that through which the Saracens came from Spain to over-run southern Gaul. Somport was the *Summus Pyreneus* of the old-time historians of the Romans.

CHAPTER XXIII

ORTHEZ AND THE GAVE D'OLORON

Orthez is another of those cities of the Pyrenees which does not live up to its possibilities, at least not in a commercial sense. Nevertheless, some of us find it all the more delightful for that. It is a city where the relics of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance are curiously intermingled, and if one within its walls so chose he could imagine himself as living in the past as well as in the present, and this in spite of the fact that the city has been remodelled and restored in certain quarters out of all semblance to its former self.

There is little or nothing remaining of that time which Froissart described with such minuteness when writing of the court at Orthez' château.

All that remains of this great pile is the Tour de Moncade, but from its grandeur and commanding site one realizes well enough that in its time it was hardly overshadowed by the better preserved edifices at Pau and Foix.

At the northeast of Orthez, on a hill overlooking the city is an ancient, rectangular tower, its sides mellowed by ages, and its crest in ruins.

"*Savez-vous ce que sont ces ruines?*" you ask of any one, and they will tell you that it is all that remains of the fine château of Gaston Phœbus. Fêtes and crimes were curiously intermingled within its walls, for always little rivulets of blood flowed in mediæval times as the accompaniment of the laughter of the feast.

Gaston de Foix, after the burning of his château, came to Orthez in the thirteenth century, and began the citadel of Orthez — the "*château-noble*" of the chronicles of Froissart. The edifice played an important rôle in the history of Béarn.

At that time Gaston was a vassal of Edward III of England who was then making a Crusade in the East. On his return he found this "*château-noble*" already built, and his surprise was great, for he knew not what it portended. He concluded that it could only mean the rebellion of his vassal, and he ordered the Seneschal of Gascony to demand the surrender of the property. When this was refused Edward seized it and all the domains of Béarn, and sent Gerard de Laon as envoy to put the

new political machinery in running order. The envoy entered Orthez without the least obstacle being put in his way, but in an instant the gates were closed and he was made a prisoner. Irritated by this outrage, Edward, at the head of an imposing army, marched on Orthez. Gaston, seized with fear, lost his head, and made up his mind to surrender before he was attacked. No protestations of future devotion to his overlord would, however, be accepted, and Edward made him prisoner on the spot. To regain his liberty, Gaston promised to turn over the "Fortresse d'Orthez" but, when he was set free, he established himself with a doubled garrison behind his walls and prepared for resistance. Edward pleaded for justice and honourable dealing, and a quarrel, long and animated, followed. The affair took on such proportions that the Pope sent his legate, as an intermediary, to make peace. Gaston would hear of no compromise, and called upon the king of France to take his part. A sort of council was finally arranged, during which Gaston became so exasperated that he threw his glove in the face of the English king. He begged the king's pardon afterwards, and an agreement was reached whereby everything was left as it had been before the quarrel began.

Many imperishable souvenirs are left of the reign at Orthez of the brilliant Gaston de Foix, when tourneys and fêtes followed in rapid succession. It was Orthez' most brilliant epoch.

It was here, to the court of Gaston Phœbus, that Messire Jehan Froissart came, in 1388, and stayed three weeks and some of his most brilliant pages relate to this visit. Of his host, the chronicler said: *" De toutes choses il est si parfait."*

Gaston Phœbus was so powerful and magnificent a seigneur in his own right, and his castle at Orthez was such a landmark of history that Louis XI — who conceded little enough to others as a usual thing — said to his followers as he was passing through Béarnais territory on a pilgrimage: *" Messeigneurs, laissez l'epée de France, nous sortons ici du royaume."*

Gaston Phœbus was the most accomplished seigneur of his time, and he had for his motto *" Toquos-y se gaasos "*—"Attack who dares."

One day, in the month of August, 1390, on returning from a bear hunt, greatly fatigued, he was handed a cup from which to drink. He drank from the cup and instantly expired. Was he poisoned? That is what no one knows. It was the custom of the time to make away with one's enemies thus, and in this connection

The Pont d'Orthez

one recalls that Gaston himself killed his own son because he would not eat at table.

Orthez was deserted by the court for Pau, and in time the natural destruction of wind and weather, and the hand of man, stripped the château to what one sees to-day.

The Pont d'Orthez is a far better preserved monument of feudal and warlike times, and it was a real defence to the city, as can be readily understood by all who view it. Its four hardy arches span the Gave as they did in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It was from the summit of one of the sentinel towers of this most remarkable of mediæval bridges that the soldiers of Montgomery obliged the monks to throw themselves into the river below. The "Brothers of the Bridge" were a famous institution in mediæval times, and they should have been better treated than they usually were, but too frequently indeed they were massacred without having either the right or the means to defend themselves.

The history of Montgomery's connection with Orthez, or more particularly the Pont d'Orthez, reads almost as if it were legend, though indeed it is truth. The story is called by the French historians "La Chronique de la Tour des Caperas."

Jeanne d'Albret, the mainstay of Protestantism in her day, wished to make Orthez the religious capital, and accordingly she built here a splendid church in which to expound the theories of Calvin and brought "professors" from Scotland and England to preach the new dogma. Orthez became at once the point of attack for those of the opposite faith, and as horrible a massacre as was ever known took place in the streets of Orthez and gave perhaps the first use of the simile that the river flowed as a river of blood. Priests and monks were the special prey of the Protestants, while they themselves were being attacked from without. One by one as they were hunted out from their hiding-places the priests and lay brothers were pushed from the parapet of the bridge into the Gave below. If any gained the banks by swimming they were prodded and stabbed by still other soldiery with lances, and from this great *noyade* the great Tour des Caperas became known as the Tour des Prêtres.

To-day Montauban and Orthez have relatively the largest Protestant populations of any of the cities of France.

The old Route Royale between Bayonne and the capital of Béarn and Navarre passed through Orthez, and the same narrow streets,

irregular, badly paved, and badly kept up, are those which one traverses to-day on entering and leaving the city. One great improvement has been made in the ancient quarter of the town — though of course one does not know what historical souvenirs it may have supplanted — and that is the laying out of a *mail* or mall, planted on either side with great elms, and running from the banks of the Gave to the fine fifteenth-century — but still Gothic — church, well at the centre of the town.

The "*jambons de Bayonne*" are mostly cured at Orthez, and it is indeed the leading industry of the city. The porkers of Orthez may not be corn fed, but they are well and cleanly nourished, which is more than can be said of many "domesticated pigs" in New and Old England, which are eaten with a great relish by those who have brought them up.

In the religious wars Orthez played a grand rôle, and in 1814 it was the scene of one of the great struggles of France against alien invasion of her territory. Just north of the city, on the height of a flanking hill, Wellington — at the head of a force very much superior, let no one forget — inflicted a bloody defeat on Maréchal Soult. The Duc de Dalmatie lost, it is recorded, nearly four thousand men, but he

wounded or killed six thousand in the same engagement. General Foy here received his fourth wound on the field of battle.

Orthez is one of the really great feudal cities of the south of France. In the ninth century it was known as Orthesium, and belonged to the Vicomtes de Dax, who, only when they were conquered by Gaston III, Prince of Béarn, ceded the city to the crown of Béarn and Navarre.

It was in the château of Orthez that the unfortunate Blanche of Castille, daughter of the king of Aragon, was poisoned by her sister, the wife of Gaston IV, Comte de Foix. This was one of the celebrated crimes of history, though for that matter the builder of the château, the magnificent (*sic*) Gaston Phœbus, committed one worthy to rank with it when he killed his brother and "propre fils" on the mere suspicion that they might some day be led to take sides against him.

Orthez flourished greatly under its Protestant princes, but it waned and all but dwindled away in the unpeaceful times immediately following upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The cessation of the practice of the arts of industry, and very nearly those of commerce, left the city poor and impoverished, and

it is only within recent generations that it has arisen again to importance.

The donjon of Moncade is all that remains of the once proud château where Gaston Phœbus held more than one brilliant court on his excursions beyond the limits of his beloved Foix. It dominates the whole region, however, and adds an accentuated note of grimness to the otherwise gay melody of the Gave as it flows down to join the Adour from the high valleys of the Pyrenees.

On the opposite hillside is a memorial in honour of the brave General Foy, which will recall to some the victory of Wellington over Soult, and to others, who have not forgotten their Dumas, the fact that it was General Foy who first gave the elder Dumas his start as writer of romances.

Salies de Béarn is a near neighbour of Orthez, and can be omitted from no Pyrenean itinerary. The bustling little market-town and watering-place combined dates, as to the foundation of its great industry, back to the tenth century, when the Duc de Gascogne gave to the monks of the Monastery of Saint Pé an establishment ready fitted that they might commence the industry of recovering salt from the neighbouring salt springs. All through mediæval

times, and down as late as 1840, the industry was carried on under the old concession.

All the distractions of a first-class watering-place may be had here to-day, and the "season" is on from May to September. The city is the birthplace of Colonel Dambourges, who became famous for his defence of Quebec against the English in 1775.

At Salies is still the house which sheltered Jeanne d'Albret when she took the waters here, and not far away is the spot where died Gaston Phœbus, as he was returning from a bear hunt. These two facts taken together make of Salies hallowed historic ground.

At Salies de Béarn one recalls a scrap of literary history that is interesting; Dumas père certainly got inspiration for the names of his three *mousquetaire* heroes from hereabouts. Not far away is Athos — which he gave to the Comte de la Fère, while Aramits and Artagnan are also near-by. In any historical light further than this they are all unimportant however.

Six kilometres to the northward is the Château de Bellocq, a fine mediæval country house (fourteenth century), though unroofed to-day, the residence of Jeanne d'Albret when she sojourned in the neighbourhood. The walls,

flanked with four great round towers, are admirably preserved, and the vaulting and its ribs, two square towers and a great entrance gate show the manner of building of the time with great detail.

Five leagues from Orthez, on a little valley plain, watered by the Gave d'Oloron, is the tiny little city of Navarreux. Its population is scarce above a thousand, but it is the centre of affairs for twenty-five communes, containing perhaps twelve thousand souls. It is a typical, bustling, little Pyrenean metropolis, and the comings and goings on market-day at the little Hôtel de France are as good an illustration of the life and manners of a people of small affairs as one will find in a year of travel.

Henri d'Albret of Navarre picked out the site of the city in the midst of this fertile plain, and planned that it should increase and multiply, if not in population, at least in prosperity, though it was at first a "private enterprise," like Richelieu's garden-city in Touraine.

The preëminence of Navarreux was short lived. Henri d'Albret had built it on the squared-off, straight-street, Chicago plan, had surrounded it with walls, and even had a fortress built by Vauban, in the expectation of making it the commercial capital of the Pyre-

nees, but man proposes, and the lines of communication or trade disposes, and many a thought-to-be-prosperous town has finally dwindled into impotency. There was a good deal in the favour of Navarreux; its situation was central, and it was surrounded by a numerous population, but its dream was over in a couple of hundred years and the same year (1790) saw both its grandeur and its decadence.

To-day it remains still a small town, tied to the end of an omnibus line which runs out from Orthez a dozen or fifteen kilometres away. The fortifications of Vauban are still there and a remarkable old city gate, called the Porte St. Antoine, a veritable gem of feudal architecture. The very dulness and disappointment of the place appeal to one hugely. One might do worse than doze away a little while here after a giddy round at Pau or Biarritz. Navarreux is of the past and lives in the past; it will never advance. As a fortress it has been unclassed, but its walls one day guarded — as a sort of last line of defence — the route from Spain via Ronçevaux and Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. In those days it certainly occupied a proud position in intent and in reality, as its citadel sat high on a little terrace-plateau, dominated in

The Walls of Navarreux

turn by the red dome of its church still higher up. The effect is still much the same, impotent though the city walls and ramparts have become.

The route into Navarreux from the south is almost a tree-shaded boulevard, and crosses the Gave on an old five-arched bridge, so narrow that one vehicle can scarcely pass, — to say nothing of two. This picturesque bridge was also the work of Henri d'Albret, the founder of the primitive city. This first foundation was a short distance from the present village. Its founder in a short time came to believe he had made a mistake, and that the bourg as it was placed would be too difficult to defend, so he tore it down in real northwest Dakota fashion, and built the present city. Louis XIV and Vauban had great plans for it, and would have done much, but Oloron in time relieved it of all pretensions to a distinction, as, in turn, Pau robbed Oloron.

Between Navarreux and Sauveterre, along the Gave d'Oloron, is a whole string of little villages and hamlets whose names are scarcely ever mentioned except by the local postman. It is a winsome valley, and the signs of civilization, pale though they be, throw no ugly shadows on the landscape. Midway between these

two little centres is Audaux, which possesses a vast seventeenth-century château, flanked with a series of high coiffed pavilions and great domes, like that of Valençay in Touraine.

Its history is unimportant, and is rather vague, but a mere glance at its pompous ornateness is a suggestion of the great contrast between the châteaux of the north and centre of France and those of the Midi. In the north the great residential châteaux, as contrasted with the fortress-châteaux, were the more numerous; here the reverse was the case, and the feudal château, which was more or less of a fortress, predominated. The Château d'Audaux, sitting high on its own little plateau, and surrounded by great chestnut trees, is almost the peer of its class in these parts — from a grandiose architectural view point at any rate.

Sauveterre, twenty kilometres from Navarreux, is one of those old-time bourgs which puts its best side forward when viewed from a distance. Really it is nothing but a grim old ruin, so far as its appeal for the pilgrim goes. Close acquaintance develops a squalor and lackadaisical air which is not in the least in keeping with that of its neighbours. It is the ensemble of its rooftops and its delightful site which gives

Sauveterre almost its only charm. In the Middle Ages it was a fortified town which played a considerable part in olden history. To-day the sole evidence that it was a place of any importance is found in a single remaining arch of its old bridge, surmounted by a defending tower similar to those which guard the bridges at Orthez and Cahors, but much smaller.

There is another relic still standing of Sauveterre's one-time greatness, but it is outside the town itself. The grim, square donjon of the old Château de Montréal rises on a hilltop opposite the town, and strikes the loudest note of all the superb panorama of picturesque surroundings. It was the guardian of the fate of Sauveterre in feudal times, and it is the guardian, or beacon, for travellers by road to-day as they come up or down the valley.

Within the town there is, it should be mentioned, a really curious ecclesiastical monument, the thirteenth-century church, with a combination of Romanesque and Gothic construction which is remarkable; so remarkable is it that in spite of its lack of real beauty the French Government has classed it as a "*Monument Historique.*" The sublime panorama of the Pyrenees frames the whole with such a gracious splendour that one is well-minded to take

the picture for the sake of the frame. This may be said of Tarbes as well, which is a really banal great town, but which has perhaps the most delightful Pyrenean background that exists.

Sauveterre is another centre for the manufacture of rope-soled *espadrilles,* which in Anglo-Saxon communities are used solely by bathers at the seaside, but which are really the most comfortable and long-enduring footwear ever invented, and are here, and in many other parts of France, worn by a majority of the population.

Up out of the valley of the Oloron and down again into that of the Bidouze, a matter of eighteen or twenty kilometres, and one comes to Saint-Palais which formerly disputed the title of capital of French Navarre with Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. This was because Henri d'Albret, king of Navarre, established his *chancellerie* here after the loss of Pamplona to Spain.

Saint-Palais is what the French call a "*ville mignonne.*" Nothing else describes it. It sits jauntily perched on a tongue of mother earth, at the juncture of the Joyeuse and the Bidouze, and its whitewashed houses, its tiled roofs and its washed-down dooryards and pavements sug-

gest that some of its inhabitants must one day have been in Holland, a place where they pay more attention to this sort of house-cleaning than anywhere else.

Saint-Palais has no historical monuments; all is as new and shining as Monte Carlo or the Digue at Ostend, but its history of long ago is important. Before 1620 it was the seat of the sovereign court of French Navarre and possessed a mint where the money of the little state was coined.

The most distinctive architectural monument of Saint-Palais, the modern church and the hybrid Palais de Justice being strictly ineligible, is the *fronton* for the game of *pelote,* Saint-Palais being one of the head centres for the sport.

Arthur Young, a great traveller, an agriculturist, and a writer of repute, passed this way in 1787. He made a good many true and just observations, more or less at hazard, of things French, and some others that were not so just. The following can hardly be literally true, and if true by no means proves that Jacques Bonhomme is not as good a man as his cousin John Bull, nor even that he is not as well nourished. "*Chacun à son gout!*" He said, writing of the operation of getting dinner at his inn: "I saw

them preparing the soup, the colour of which was not inviting; ample provision of cabbage, grease and water, and about as much meat, for a score of people, as half a dozen Suffolk farmers would have eaten, and grumbled at their host for short commons.'' What a condemnation to be sure, and what an unmerited one! The receipt is all right, as far as it goes, but he should have added a few leeks, a couple of carrots and an onion or two, and then he would have composed a *bouilli* as fragrant and nourishing as the Englishman's chunks of blood-red beef he is for ever talking about. Our '' agriculturist '' only learned half his lesson, and could not recite it very well at that.

In the midst of a great plain lying between Saint-Palais, Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port and Bayonne, perhaps fifty kilometres south of the left bank of the Adour, are the neighbouring little towns of Iholdy and Armendarits. The former is the market town of a vast, but little populated, canton, and a village as purely rustic and simple as one could possibly imagine. Iholdy and its few unpretentious little shops and its quaint unworldly little hotel caters only to a thin population of sheep and pig growers, and their wants are small, save when they go afield to Peyrehorade, St. Jean or Bayonne.

One eats of the products of the country here, and enjoys them, too, even if mutton, lamb and little pig predominate. The latter may or may not be thought a delicacy, but certainly it was better here than was ever met with before by the writer of these lines; and no prejudice prevented a second helping.

Armendarits, Iholdy's twin community, saw the birth of Renaud d'Elissagory, who built what was practically the first gunboat. The birthplace of "*Petit Renaud,*" as he was, and is still, affectionately called, the inventor of *galiotes à bombes,* is still inhabited and reckoned as one of the sights of these parts.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BIRTH OF FRENCH NAVARRE

Basse-Navarre or Navarre-Française, together with Béarn, made, under the Emperor Hadrian, a part of Aquitaine.

The Roman conquest of Gaul was the first impetus given towards a coherent massing of the peoples. Formerly there had been many tribes and races, but the three divisions made by the Romans reduced things to a minimum. Cisalpine Gaul was that part where the inhab-

itants wore a sort of adaptation of the Roman toga. In Trans-Alpine Gaul, situated in the Rhône basin and along the Mediterranean between Italy and Spain, the inhabitants wore *braies* or *bragues* — a sort of jacket extending down almost to the knees, a detail of dress which has evolved itself into the blouse, and perhaps even the great cloak of the mountaineers of the Pyrenees. The remainder of ancient Gaul was known as the country where the natives wore their long hair hanging, — literally the *Gaule chevelue.*

Through the times of Cæsar the divisions became indifferently known by various names, until with Augustus there came to be four great divisions, the Narbonnaise, Aquitaine, Lyonnaise and Belgique.

Towards the fifth century the Vascons, or Gascons, the ancient inhabitants of Spanish Cantabria, established themselves snugly in these well protected valleys of the Pyrenees. They warred with the Saracens, and for five centuries were in a continual uproar of battle and bloodshed.

Among themselves, the dukes and counts of Gascogne quarrelled continuously, and disputed the sovereignty of the country with the Vicomtes de Béarn.

In the ninth century a treaty was consummated which assured to Bernard, Comte d'Armagnac, the Comté de Gascogne, and to Gaston de Centulle the suzerainty of Béarn, while Navarre came by heritage to the Comtes de Champagne, and in the thirteenth century to Philippe-le-Bel as a dot with Jeanne, his wife. In the same manner it came to the house of Evreux through Jeanne II, daughter of Louis-le-Hutin.

With the marriage of Blanche II, the granddaughter of Jeanne II, Navarre passed to the king of Aragon and to Eléonore, and later with the Comté de Foix et de Bigorre and the Vicomté de Béarn, went to Jean, Sieur d'Albret, with whom the history of the kingdom is so commonly associated.

Jean d'Albret II, by reason of his marriage with Catherine of Béarn, the heiress to the crown of Navarre, became joint ruler of the kingdom. He was a gentle, easy-going prince, liberal, but frivolous, and loved no serious occupation in life. He was popular to excess and dined, say the chronicles, "without ceremony, with any one who asked him," a custom which still obtains with many who are not descendants of a king of Navarre. He danced frequently in public with the wives and daugh-

ters of his subjects, a democratic proceeding which was not liked by his court, who told him that he "danced on a volcano." This in a measure was true, for he lost that part of the kingdom known as Spanish Navarre to Ferdinand of Aragon.

Up to the commencement of the sixteenth century, the Royaume de Navarre occupied both slopes of the Pyrenees and had Pamplona for its capital, but in 1512, Ferdinand the Catholic, of Aragon, with the approbation of the Pope, usurped most of the territory and left the king of Navarre, the legitimate sovereign, only a small morsel eight leagues long by five in width, with St. Jean-Pied-de-Porte as its principal city.

A picturesque figure was Ferdinand, King of Aragon on his own part, King of Castille by his wife Isabella, and King of Grenada by conquest; "a heritor of three bastard crowns," he was called. At his death he was succeeded by the infamous and cruel Charles V.

That which remained, French Navarre, was the portion of the united kingdom lying on the French slopes of the Pyrenees. The loss of the Spanish province was really due to the excommunication of Jean d'Albret and Catherine

by the Pope, thus giving the Catholic Ferdinand power to compel a division.

The then ruling monarchs of Béarn and Navarre came to a sad realization of their position. It was this circumstance which gave birth to one of the famous *mots* of history. "If we had not been born, we would not have lost Navarre," said the unhappy Catherine to her spouse.

Previously, though, the region had been known as Basse-Navarre; and in Spanish, Navarra Baja, and had had its *États* or *Parlement,* and its own special laws. Its *Parlement* was composed of three orders, the clergy, the noblesse and the *tiers.* Two great families stood out in Basse-Navarre in these times above all others, the Seigneurs de Grammont et Bidache and those of Lux and Ostabat. Béarn at the time was composed of twelve ancient baronies, the bishoprics of Lescar and Oloron, and the seigneuries of Navailles, Andoins, Lescun, Correze, Miossens, Arros and Lons.

French Navarre — the Navarre-Française — was by this time a reality and has been variously known since to historians; to the French as Basse-Navarre and Navarre du Nord; to the Spaniards as Navarra Baja; to the Basques

as Navarra-deca-ports, and Navarra-françia; and to the kings of France as the Royaume de Navarre.

Henri, son of Jean d'Albret, married the first Marguerite de Valois, sister of François I, the "Marguerite of Marguerites." The only daughter of this marriage was wed with Antoine Bourbon-Vendome and became the mother of Henri IV.

By an edict of 1620 Louis XIII united the crown of France with that of Navarre, Béarn and the other patrimonial states. Such is the evolution of the little Royaume de Navarre and its incorporation into French domain.

The king of Navarre's title was a formidable one, and even included the word monsieur. Princes, bishops, popes and saints were at that time known as Monsieur, a title even more dignified than Monseigneur, and the "*Messieurs de France*" were as much of the noblesse of France as were the "*Milords d'Angleterre*" of the nobility of England.

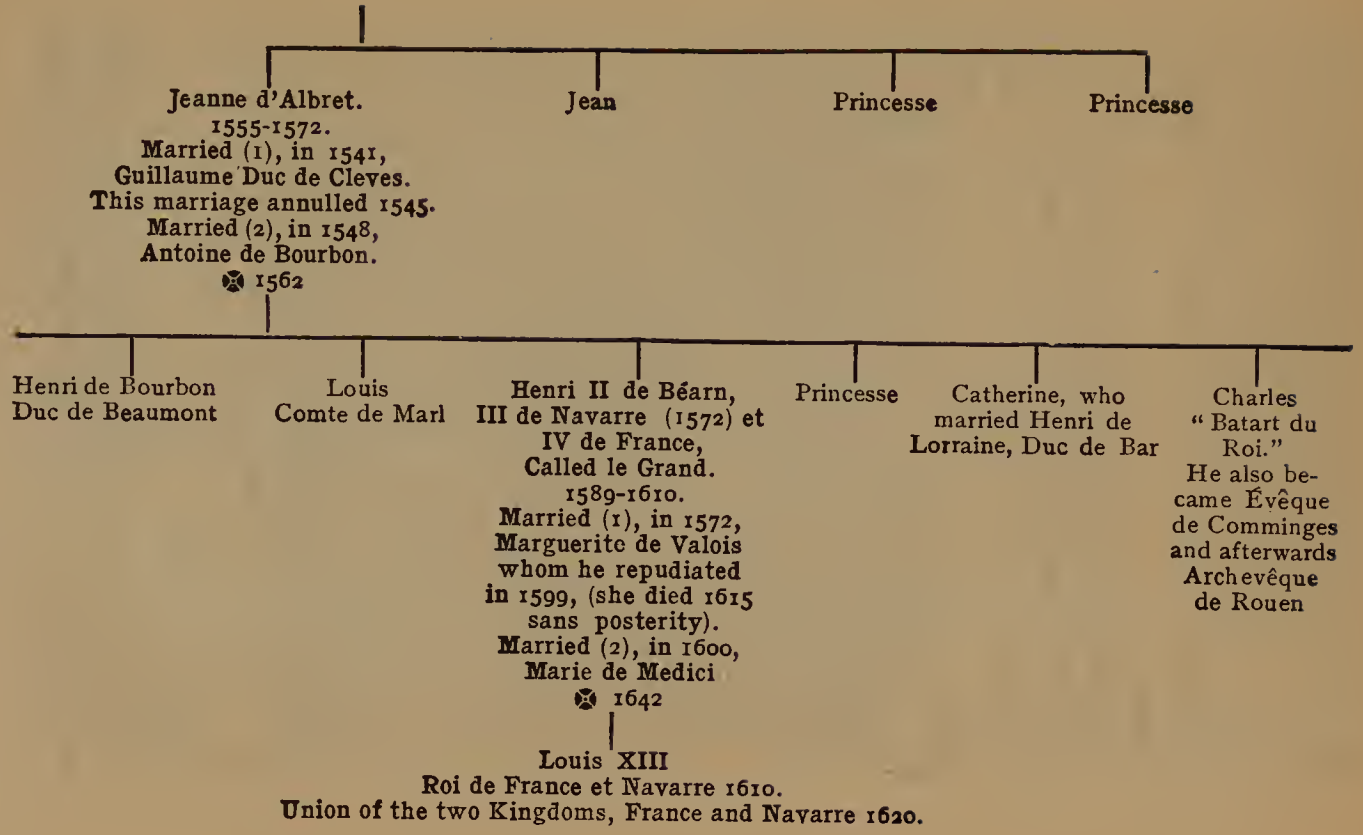
The full title of the king of Navarre in the fifteenth century was as follows:—

Monsieur François-Phœbus, par la grace de Dieu, Roi de Navarre, Duc de Nemours, de Guandi, de Montblanc et de Penafiel, et, par la même grace Comte de Foix, Seigneur de Béarn,

KINGS of BASSE-NAVARRE and KINGS of FRANCE & NAVARRE

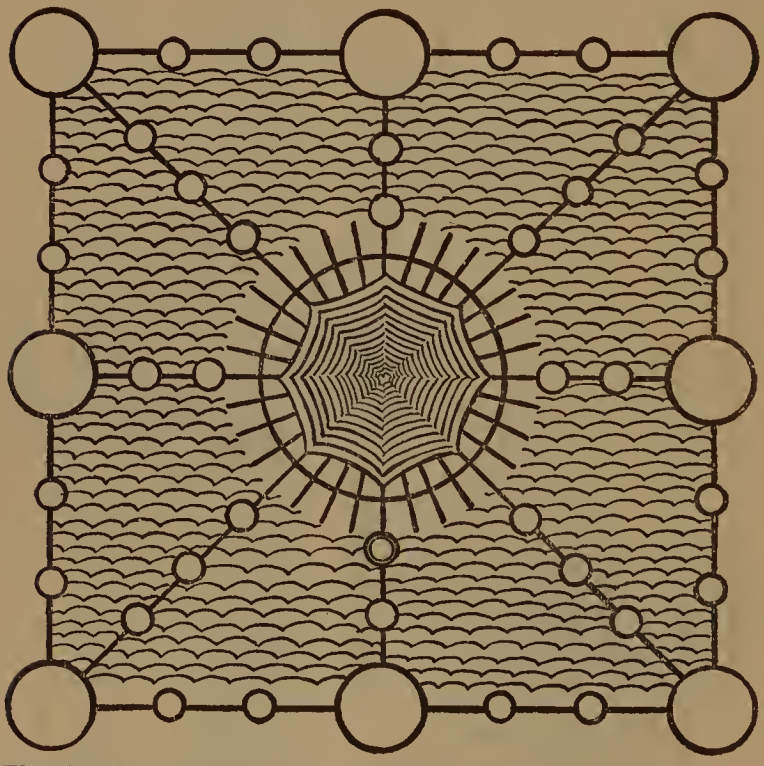
Catherine de Foix et Jean III d'Albret

- **Madeleine**
- **Jean**
- **Andre**
- **Henri I de Béarn et II de Navarre —d'Albret.** 1517—1555. Married, in 1527, Marguerite d'Angouleme, Duchesse d'Alençon ✠ 1549
- **Isabelle,** Married René, Vicomte de Rohan
- **Anne,** Married Jean, Comte d'Astarac
- **Catherine,** who became the abbesse of La Trinite at Caen in Normandy
- **"Fils naturel"** of Jean III d'Albret. He became Évêque de Comminges


Jeanne d'Albret.
1555-1572.
Married (1), in 1541,
Guillaume Duc de Cleves.
This marriage annulled 1545.
Married (2), in 1548,
Antoine de Bourbon.
✠ 1562
Jean
Princesse
Princesse
Henri de Bourbon
Duc de Beaumont
Louis
Comte de Marl
Henri II de Béarn,
III de Navarre (1572) et
IV de France,
Called le Grand.
1589-1610.
Married (1), in 1572,
Marguerite de Valois
whom he repudiated
in 1599, (she died 1615
sans posterity).
Married (2), in 1600,
Marie de Medici
✠ 1642
Princesse
Catherine, who
married Henri de
Lorraine, Duc de Bar
Charles
" Batart du
Roi."
He also be-
came Évêque
de Comminges
and afterwards
Archevêque
de Rouen
Louis XIII
Roi de France et Navarre 1610.
Union of the two Kingdoms, France and Navarre 1620.

Comte de Bigorre et de Rivegorce, Vicomte de Castelbon, de Marsau, Gavardan et Nébouzan, Seigneur de la ville de Valaguer et Pair de France.

The arms of Navarre have ever been a mystery to antiquarians, but it seems there is some semblance of Basque tradition and folk-lore in



The Arms of Navarre

it all, in that there is an old Basque game which is played upon a diagram, or scale, traced upon

the ground, and following the principal outlines of the blazonings of the ancient kings of Navarre. Which came first, the hen or the egg?

Authorities differ, and so it is with the Basque game of *laz Marellas,* and the royal arms of the Navarres. Labastide says the game came down from the time when the Basques of today were originally Phœnicians. If this be so, the royal arms were but a copy of something that had gone before. Certainly they form as curious and enigmatic an armorial device as is found in heraldry.

The Royaume de Navarre has so completely disappeared and been so absorbed by France that it takes a considerable knowledge of geography and history to be able to place it precisely upon the map of modern Europe, hidden away as it was in what are now the two arrondissements of Bayonne and Saint-Palais.

They were a noble race, the men of Béarn and Navarre, the Basques especially, and the questionable traits of the *cagots* and gypsies have left but little impress on the masses.

Henri IV, faithful in his sentiment for his first subjects, would have shown them his predilection by allowing them to remain an independent monarchy. He would not that the

kingdom of his mother be mingled with that of France, but intriguing counsel prevailed and the alliance was made, though Navarre escaped conquest and was still ruled by the sceptre of its legitimate sovereign.

How near France came to being ruled by Navarre instead of Navarre by France is recalled by the following bit of recorded history. When Philippe V (le Long) came to the throne of France (1316) his right was contested by many princes. Among others the crown was claimed by Jeanne de Navarre, but an assembly of bishops, seigneurs and bourgeois of Paris declared for the Salic law — which proscribed the right to rule the French to one of the female sex, and this against feudal rights as they were known and protected in the satellite kingdoms surrounding the royal domain. It was agreed later (by Philippe-le-Long) that if the widow of Louis X should have another female child, the rights appertaining to Navarre should belong to her and her stepsister Jeanne, making it an independent monarchy again.

When Philippe-le-Bel came to the throne of France it was his wife Jeanne who, by common consent, administered the affairs of Navarre. She chased the Aragonians and Castilians from her fair province, and put her people into a state

of security hitherto unknown. "She held," said Mézeray the historian, "every one enchanted by her eyes, her ears, and her heart, and she was equally eloquent, generous and liberal." A veritable paragon of a woman evidently.

Henri II, son of Catherine and Jean d'Albret II, succeeded to the throne of French Navarre at the age of thirteen. He followed the French king, François, to Italy, and was made prisoner at the unfortunate battle of Pavia, finally escaping through a ruse.

François Premier, king of France, and Henri d'Albret, king of Navarre, each nourished an equal aversion for the king of Spain, the prime cause of that fateful day at Pavia. The first hated the Spanish monarch as a rival; the second as the usurper of his lands. They united arms, but the battle of Pavia, when "all was lost save honour," gave matters such a setback that naught but time could overcome them.

It was Henri II's marriage with Marguerite of Valois, the Duchesse d'Alençon, in 1526, by which he acquired the Armagnac succession as a gift from his brother-in-law, François Premier, that brought to Navarre's crown nearly all of Guyenne. In 1555 the young king died

at Pau, leaving a daughter, Jeanne d'Albret, who with her second husband, Antoine de Bourbon, Duc de Vendome, succeeded to the throne.

The new rulers did not attempt or accomplish much, save to embrace Calvinism with zeal. Suffice to recall the well-known facts that Antoine died in 1562 from a wound received in the siege of Rouen, and that Jeanne herself died from the poison of the wicked Catherine de Medici's gloves at Paris.

Their son, Henri III of Navarre, was the Henri IV of France. Born at Pau in 1553, he was first only the Comte de Viane. When he came to Paris he would not have allied his Pyrenean possessions with those of France but for the pressure brought to bear upon him. He declared that his ancestral lands should remain entirely separate, but the procureur general, La Guesle, forced his hand, and it was thus that the Royaume de France became augmented by Basse-Navarre, the Comtés d'Armagnac, Foix, d'Albret and Bigorre, the Duché de Vendome, the Comté de Périgord and the Vicomté de Limoges.

The story of Béarn and Navarre, for most folk, begins with those kings of Navarre who were also kings of France. The first of these was the white-plumed knight Henri III, Prince

of Béarn, who became Henri IV of France. The France of the Valois, which strain died with Henri III, murdered by the black monk Clement, was much more narrow in its confines than now. In the northeast it lacked Lorraine, Franche Comté, Bresse, Dombes and Bucey; in the south Roussillon, Béarn and Basse-Navarre, and there was a sort of quasi-independence observed by the former great states of Bretagne, Bourgogne and Dauphiné.

With the coming of the king of Navarre to the throne of France, the three great movements which took place in the religious situation, the manners and customs of the court and noblesse, and in the aspirations of the people gave an aspect of unity and solidarity to France.

The religious question was already momentous when Henri IV was crowned, and Protestantism and its followers were gaining ground everywhere, though the real Français — the Guises and the Bourbons, the princes of Lorraine and the "princes of the blood" — were on the side of Catholicism, and had their swords ever unsheathed in its behalf.

The court, in the midst of this great religious quarrel, was also in a state of transition. Catherine and her gay troupe of damsels had passed,

as also had Charles IX, who died shortly after the Huguenot massacre of St. Bartholomew's night. His brother, and successor to the throne, Henri III, Duc d'Anjou, was a weakling, and he too died miserably at the point of the assassin's knife, and few seemed to regret the passing of him who devoted himself more to monkeys, parrots and little dogs than to statecraft. Henri of Béarn was the strong man in public view, and of him great things were expected by all parties in spite of his professed Calvinism of the time.

It was during the reign of the feeble-witted Henri III that Henri, king of Navarre, became the titular head of the Huguenots; thus abjuring the Catholic religion that he had previously embraced under pressure. The Protestant League became a powerful institution, and the *gentilshommes* of Béarn, Guienne, Poitou and Dauphiné became captains in the cause, just as the *gentilshommes* of Picardie and Artois became captains of Catholicism. The whole scheme was working itself out on traditional hereditary lines; it was the Protestantism of the mountains against the Catholicism of the lowlands. As for the people, the masses, they simply stood by and wondered, ready for any innovation which augured for the better.

Arms of Henri IV of France and Navarre

This was the state of France upon the coming of Henri IV to the throne, and the joining of Basse-Navarre and Béarn to the royal domain.

Unquestionably it is a fact that the feudality in France ceased only with the passing of Louis XI, and the change in the Pyrenean states was contemporary. The Renaissance made great headway in France, after its importation from Italy at the hands of Charles VIII and his followers. Constantinople had been taken; art and letters were everywhere in the ascendency; printing had been invented; and America was on the verge of being discovered. The golden days of the new civilization were about dawning.

The Renaissance here in Béarn and Navarre, under the shadow of the Pyrenees, flowered as it did nowhere else out of Italy, so far as its application to life and letters went. Many celebrated litterateurs and poets had been persecuted and chased from France, and here they found a welcome refuge. To remark only two, Desperriers and Marat, it is interesting to note that the sympathetic Marguerite of Navarre took them under her patronage, and even made them *valets de chambre.*

Marguerite's passions were, according to the historians, noble, but according to the roman-

cers they were worldly. Said Erasmus: "*Elle était chaste et peu sujette aux passions,*" and contemporary historians agree with him; while Marat, the poet *valet de chambre,* wrote the following: —

> "Que je suis serf d'un monstre fort étrange,
> Monstre je dis, car pour tout vrai, elle a
> Corps féminin, cœur d'homme et tête d'ange."

In 1574 Brantome, the chronicler, had finished his military career and was retained by Henri III of France as a gentleman of the bedchamber. Here he passed through many affairs of intrigue and the heart. In 1581 he received a mission to go and interview the king of Navarre, for which he received the sum of six hundred *écus soleil.* What the subject of this mission was no one knows; there is no further mention of it either in the works of Brantôme or the letters of the king of Navarre, but at any rate he became enamoured of Marguerite, and his account of his first meeting with her is one of the classic documents of French history. "I dare to say," said he, "that she was *si belle et si admirable* that all the three hundred persons of the assembly were ravished and astounded."

It is on Marguerite of Navarre, no less than

on the plumed Henry, that the popular interest in Navarre and its history has been built.

A Brief Chronology of French and Spanish Navarre

Spanish Navarre came to be annexed to the Spanish crown in 1512 through the efforts and energies of Ferdinand the Catholic king of Aragon.

French Navarre virtually came to France in 1328, but its independent monarchs since that time have been:

Jeanne II (et Philippe)	1328
Charles II (le Mauvais)	1349
Charles III	1387
Jean II (et Blanche)	1425
Eléonore	1479
Phœbus de Foix	1479
Catherine (et Jean d'Albret II)	1484
Henri II	1517
Jeanne d'Albret (et Antoine de Bourbon)	1555
Henri III	1589-1610

It was Henri III of Navarre who became Henri IV of France and it was he who first brought the little kingdom to the crown of France, the double title being borne by his successors up to the abdication of Charles X in 1830.

CHAPTER XXV

THE BASQUES

The Basque Country

Most people, or certainly most women, connect the name basque with a certain article of ladies' wearing apparel. Just what its functions were, when it was in favour a generation ago, a mere man may not be supposed to know.

Théophile Gautier has something to say on the subject, so he doubtless knew; and Victor Hugo delivered himself of the following couplet: —

> " C'était plaisir de voir danser la jeune fille;
> Sa basquine agitait ses pailettes d'azur."

The French Basques are divided into three families, the Souletins, the Bas-Navarrais and the Labourdins. They possess, however, the same language and other proofs of an identical origin in the simplicity and quaintness of their dress and customs.

The Labourdin Basques inhabit the plains and valleys running down to the sea at the western termination of the Pyrenees, and live a more luxurious life than the Navarrais, even emigrating largely, and entering the service of the merchant and naval marine; whereas the Navarrais occupy themselves mostly with agriculture (and incidentally are the largest meat eaters in France) and contribute their services only to the army. The contrast between the sailor and fisher folk of the coast, and the soldiers and farmers of the high valleys is remarkable, as to face and figure, if not readily distinguishable with respect to other details.

The Labourdin Basques have a traditional history which is one of the most interesting

and varied records of the races of western Europe. In olden times the Golfe de Gascogne was frequented by great shoals of whales, and the Basques, harpooning them and killing them in the waters of their harbours, came to control the traffic.

When the whale industry fell off, and the whales themselves receded to the south seas, the Basques went after them, and for long they held the supremacy as before, finally chasing them again to the Newfoundland Banks, which indeed it is claimed the Basques discovered. At any rate the whaling industry proved a successful and profitable commerce for the Basques, and perhaps led the way for their migration in large numbers to South America and other parts of the New World.

Among the Basques themselves, and perhaps among others who have given study to the subject, the claim is made that they were the real discoverers of the New World, long before Columbus sighted the western isles. Thus is the Columbus legend, and that of Leif, son of Eric, shattered by the traditions of a people whom most European travellers from overseas hardly know of as existing. It seems that a Spanish Basque, when on a voyage from Bayonne to Madeira, was thrown out of his course

and at the mercy of the winds and waves, and finally, after many weeks, landed on the coast of Hayti. Columbus is thus proved a plagiarist.

The Basques as a race, both in France and in Spain, are a proud, jovial people, not in the least sullen, but as exclusive as turtle-doves. Unlike most of the peasants of Europe, whether at work or play, they march with head high, and beyond a grave little bow, scarcely, if ever, accost the stranger with that graciousness of manner which is usually customary with the farmer folk of even the most remote regions in France, those of the Cevennes or the upper valleys of Dauphiné or Savoie.

Upon acquaintance and recognition of equality, the Basques become effusive and are undoubtedly sincere. They don't adopt the mood for business purposes as does the Norman or the Niçois.

The traditions of the Basques concerning their ancestors comport exactly with their regard for themselves, and their pride of place is noticeable to every stranger who goes among them. They believe that they were always an independent people among surrounding nations of slaves, and, since it is doubtful if the Romans ever conquered them as they did the other

races of Gaul, this may be so. The very suggestion of this superior ancestry accounts for many of their manners and customs. Full to overflowing with the realization of their "*noblesse collective,*" they have an utter contempt for an individual nobility that borders close upon radicalism and republicanism. The greatest peer among them is the oldest of the house (*eteheco-sémia*) and he, or she, is the only individual to whom is paid a voluntary homage.

Like the children of Abraham, the Basques are, away from the seacoast, for the most part tenders of flocks and herds, and never does one meet a Basque in the mountains or on the high-roads but what he finds him carrying a *baton* or a goad-stick, as if he were a Maréchal de France in embryo. It is their "*compagnon de voyage et de fête,*" and can on occasion, when wielded with a sort of Jiu-Jitsu proficiency, be a terrible weapon. As many heads must have been cracked by the *baton* of the Basque, as by the shillelagh of the Irishman, always making allowance for the fact that the Basque is less quarrelsome and peppery than Pat.

There is absolutely no question but that the Basques are hospitable when occasion arises, and this in spite of their aloofness. In this respect they are like the Arabs of the desert.

And also like the Hebrews, the Basques are very jealous of their nationality, and have a strong repugnance against alliances and marriages with strangers.

The activity and the agility of the Basques is proverbial, in fact a proverb has grown out of it. "*Leger comme un Basque,*" is a saying known all over France. The Basque loves games and dances of all sorts, and he "makes the fête" with an agility and a passion not known of any other people to a more noticeable extent. A fête to the Basque, be it local or national, is not a thing to be lightly put aside. He makes a business of it, and expects every one else to do the same. There is no room for onlookers, and if a tourney at *pelota* — now become the new sport of Paris — is on, it is not the real thing at all unless all have a hand in it in turn. There are other *pelota* tourneys got up at Biarritz, Bayonne and Feuntarrabia for strangers, but the mountain Basque has contempt for both the players and the audience. What he would think of a sixty or eighty thousand crowd at a football or a cricket game is too horrible for words.

Pelota Basque has its home in the Basque country, both in the French and Spanish provinces, and the finest players of *pelota* come from

here. *Pelota Basque* is played in various parts of Spain, as well as *pelota* which is played with the three walls and the open hand, and thus the two games are found in the same country at the same time, though differing to no small extent.

It is to be regretted that there is not more literature connected with the game. The history of ball games is always interesting, and *pelota* is without doubt worthy of almost as much research as has been expended on the history of tennis.

In Spain *pelota* is largely played at San Sebastian, Bilbao, Madrid, Barcelona. There are three walls, and the game is played by four players, two on each side. Before the three-wall game was ever thought of, *Pelota Basque* was played in the principal cities of the Basque country, and it is still played on one wall in such cities as St. Jean-de-Luz, Biarritz, Cambo, Dax, Mauléon, Bordeaux, and even at Paris, and is recognized as the superior variety.

This was explained over the signatures of a group of professional players who introduced the game to Paris as follows: —

"We, the *pelotarie* playing here, can play either on *frontones* of the Spanish or Basque form; but there is no doubt that the latter is

The Game of Pelota

the better game, and we feel we must state that the measures of the court, and the wall, and its top curves are the same in the Paris *fronton* as at St. Jean-de-Luz, which is considered by all authorities an ideal court. Here we play three against three, and all the '*aficionados*' who have witnessed a game of Basque *pelota* are unanimous in saying it is a sport of a high grade, although different from the three-wall game.

"We, the undersigned, are the recognized champions of *pelota Basque.*

"Eloy, *of the Barcelona's Fronton.*

"Melchior, *of San Sebastian's Fronton.*

"Velasco, *of Biarritz and Bilbao's Fronton.*

"Leon Diharce, *of Paris and Buenos Ayres Fronton.*"

It is by the word *euskualdunac* that the Basques are known among themselves. Their speech has an extraordinary sound, the vowels jumping out from between the consonants as a nut shell crushes in a *casse-noisette.* No tongue of Europe sounds more strange to foreign ears, not even Hungarian. On the other hand a Basque will speak French perfectly, without the slightest accent, when he feels like it, but his Béarnais neighbour makes a horrible mess

of it, mixing Parisian French with his chattering *patois*. What a language and what a people the Basques are, to be sure! Some day some one will study them profoundly and tell us much about them that at present we only suspect. This much we know, they are allied to no other race in Europe.

Perhaps the Basques *were* originally Arabs. Who knows? A young Basque woman who carries a water-jug on her head, and marches along with a subtle undulation of the hips that one usually sees only in a desert Arab or a Corsican girl, certainly is the peer of any of the northern Europeans when it comes to a ravishing grace and carriage.

It is the Pays Basque which is the real frontier of France and Spain, and yet it resembles neiher the country to the north nor south, but stands apart, an exotic thing quite impossible to place in comparison with anything else; and this is equally true of the men and women and their manners and customs; the country, even, is wild and savage, but gay and lively withal.

One may not speak of two peoples here. It is an error, a heresy. On one side, as on the other, it is the same race, the same tongue, the same peoples — in the Basses-Pyrenees of mod-

ern France as in the Provinces of Guipuzcoa, Navarre and Biscaye of modern Spain. The only difference is that in France the peasant's *béret* is blue, while in Spain it is red.

The antiquity of *la langue escuara* or *eskual-dunac* is beyond question, but it is doubtful if it was the speech of Adam and Eve in their terrestrial paradise, as all genuine and patriotic Basques have no hesitancy in claiming.

At a Geographical Congress held in London in 1895 a M. L. d'Abartiague claimed relationship between the Basques of antiquity and the aborigines of the North American continent. This may be far-fetched or not, but at any rate it's not so far-flung as the line of reasoning which makes out Adam and Eve as being the exclusive ancestors of the Basques, and the rest of us all descended from them.

Curiously enough the Spanish Basques change their mother-tongue in favour of Castilian more readily than those on the other side of the Bidassoa do for French. The Spanish Basques to-day number perhaps three hundred and fifty thousand, though included in fiscal returns as Castilians, while in France the Basques number not more than one hundred and twenty thousand. There are two hundred

thousand Basques in Central and South America, mostly emigrants from France.

The Basque language is reckoned among the tongues apportioned to Gaul by the geographer Balbi; the Greco-Latine, the Germanic, the Celtic, the Semitic, and the Basque; thus beyond question the Basque tongue is a thing apart from any other of the tongues of Europe, as indeed are the people. The speech of the Basque country is first of all a *langue,* not a corrupted, mixed-up *patois.* Authorities have ascribed it as coming from the Phœnician, which, since it was the speech of Cadmus, the inventor of the alphabet, was doubtless the parent of many tongues. The educated Basques consider their "tongue" as one much advanced, that is, a veritable tongue, having nothing in common with the other tongues of Europe, ancient or modern, and accordingly to be regarded as one of the mother-tongues from which others have descended.

It bears a curious resemblance to Hebrew, in that nearly all appellatives express the qualities and properties of those things to which they are applied. From the point of grammatical construction, there is but one declension and conjugation, and an abundance of prepositions which makes the spoken speech concise

and rapid. Basque verbs, moreover, possess a "familiar" singular and a "respectful" singular — if one may so mark the distinction, and they furthermore have a slight variation according to the age and sex of the person who speaks as well as with regard to the one spoken to.

Really, it beats Esperanto for simplicity, and the Basque tongue allows one to make words of indeterminate length, as does the German. It is all things to all men apparently. *Ardanzesaroyareniturricoborua,* one single word, means simply: "the source of the fountain on the vineyard-covered mountain." Its simplicity may be readily understood from the following application. The Basque "of Bayonne" is *Bayona;* "from Bayonne," *Bayonaco;* that of Bayonne," *Bayonacoa.*

The ancient and prolific Basque tongue possesses a literature, but for all that, there has never yet been discovered one sole public contract, charter or law written in the language. It was never the official speech of any portion of the country, nor of the palace, nor was it employed in the courts. The laws or *fueros* were written arbitrarily in Latin, Spanish, French and Béarnais, but never in Basque.

The costume of the Basque peasant is more

coquettish and more elegant than that of any other of the races of the Midi, and in some respects is almost as theatrical as that of the Breton. All over Europe the characteristic costumes are changing, and where they are kept very much to the fore, as in Switzerland, Tyrol and in parts of Brittany, it is often for business purposes, just as the yodlers of the Alps mostly yodel for business purposes.

The Basque sticks to his costume, a blending of Spanish and something unknown. He, or she, in the Basque provinces knows or cares little as to what may be the latest style at Paris, and bowler hats and *jupes tailleurs* have not yet arrived in the Basque countryside. One has to go into Biarritz or Pau and look for them on strangers.

For the Basque a *béret bleu* (or red), a short red jacket, white vest, and white or black velvet corduroy breeches are *en régle,* besides which there are usually white stockings, held at the knees by a more or less fanciful garter. On his feet are a rough hob-nailed shoe, or the very reverse, a sort of a moccasin made of corded flax. A silk handkerchief encircles the neck, as with most southern races, and hangs down over the shoulders in what the wearer thinks is an engaging manner. On the days of the great

fêtes there is something more gorgeous still, a sort of a draped cloak, often parti-coloured, primarily the possession of married men, but affected by the young when they try to be "sporty."

The *tambour de Basque,* or drum, is a poor one-sided affair, all top and no bottom; virtually it is a tambourine, and not a drum at all. One sees it all over the Basque country, and it is as often played on with the closed fists as with a drumstick.

Like most of the old provincials of France, the Basques have numerous folk-songs and legends in verse. Most frequently they are in praise of women, and the Basque women deserve the best that can be said of them. The following as a sample, done into French, and no one can say the sentiment is not a good deal more healthy than that of Isaac Watts's "hymns."

"Peu de femmes bonnes sont bonnes danseuses,
Bonne danseuse, mauvaise fileuse;
Mauvaise fileuse, bonne buveuse,
Des femmes semblables
Sont bonnes à traiter à coups de baton."

In the Basque country, as in Brittany, the clergy have a great influence over the daily

life of the people. The Basques are not as fanatically devout as the Bretons, but nevertheless they look to the *curé* to explain away many things that they do not understand themselves; and let it be said the Basque *curé* does his duty as a leader of opinion for the good of one and all, much better than does the country squire in England who occupies a somewhat analagous position.

It is through the church that the Euskarian population of the Basses-Pyrenees have one of their strongest ties with traditional antiquity. The *curés* and the communicants of his parish are usually of one race. There is a real community of ideas.

As for the education of the new generation of Basques, it is keeping pace with that of the other inhabitants of France, though in times past even rudimentary education was far behind, and from the peasant class of only a generation or so ago, out of four thousand drawn for service in the army, nearly three hundred were destitute of the knowledge of how to read and write. In ten years, however, this percentage has been reduced one half.

The emigration of the Basques has ever been a serious thing for the prosperity of the region. Thirteen hundred emigrated from the " Basque

Française" (for South and Central America) and fifteen hundred from the "Basque Espagnole." In figures this emigration has been considerably reduced of late, but the average per year for the last fifty years has been (from the Basse-Pyrenees Département alone) something like seventeen hundred.

The real, simon-pure Basque is seen at his best at Saint Jean-Pied-de-Port, the ancient capital of French Navarre. "*Urtun hiriti urrumoffagariti,*" say the inhabitants: "Far from the city, far from health." This isn't according to the doctors, but let that pass.

To know the best and most typical parts of the Basque country, one should make the journey from Saint Jean-Pied-de-Port to Mauléon and Tardets. Here things are as little changed from mediævalism as one will find in modern France. One passes from the valley of the Nive into the valley of the Bidouze. There are no railways and one must go by road. The road is excellent moreover, though the distance is not great. Here is where the automobilist scores, but if one wants to take a still further step back into the past he may make the forty kilomètres by diligence. This is a real treat too, not at all to be despised as a means of travel, but one must hurry up or the three franc

diligence will be supplanted by a "light railway," and then where will mediævalism come in. All the same, if you've got a feverish automobile panting outside St. Jean's city gate, jump in.

There are numerous little villages en route which will not detain one except for their quaintness. One passes innumerable oxen, all swathed in swaddling clothes to keep off the flies and plodding slowly but surely along over their work. A train of Spanish mules or smaller donkeys pulling a long wagon of wood or wool is another common sight; or a man or a woman, or both, on the back of a little donkey will be no novelty either. This travel off the beaten track, if there is not much of note to stop one, is delightful, and here one gets it at its best.

Stop anywhere along the road at some inn of little pretence and you will fare well for your *déjeuner*. It will be very homely, this little Basque inn, but strangers will do very well for their simple wants. All one does is to ask "Avez-vous des œufs? Avez-vous du jambon? Du vin, je vous prie!" and the smiling rosy-cheeked *patronne,* whose name is Jeanne, Jeannette, Jeanneton, Jeannot or Margot — one or the other it's bound to be — does the rest

with a cackling "Ha! he! Eh ben! eh ben!" And you will think you never ate such excellent ham and eggs in your life as this Bayonne ham and the eggs from Basque chickens — and the wine and the home-made bread. It's all very simple, but an Escoffier could not do it better.

The peasant's work in the fields in the Basque country may not be on the most approved lines, and you can't grow every sort of a crop here in this rusty red soil, but there is a vast activity and an abundance of return for the hard workers, and all the Basques are that. The plough is as primitive as that with which the Egyptian fellah turns up the alluvial soil of the Nile, but the Basque makes good headway nevertheless, and can turn as straight a furrow, up the side of a hill or down, as most of his brothers can on the level.

In the church at Bunus is a special door reserved in times past for the descendants of the Arabs who had adopted Christianity.

Here in the Basque country you may see the peasants on a fête day dance the fandango with all the ardour and the fervour of the Andalusians themselves. Besides the fandango, there is the "*saute basque,*" a sort of a hop-skip-and-a-jump which they think is dancing,

but which isn't the thing at all, unless a grasshopper can be said to dance.

"Le Chevalet" is another Basque dance whose very name explains itself; and then there is the "Tcherero," a minuet-sort of a dance, wholly by men, and very graceful and picturesque it is, not at all boisterous.

The peasants play the *pastoral* here as they do in Languedoc and Provence, with good geniuses and evil geniuses, and all the machinery that Isaac Watts put into his hymns for little children. Here the grown men and women take them quite as seriously as did the children of our nursery days.

In the Basses-Pyrénées, besides the Basques, is distinguishable another race of dark-skinned, under-sized little men, almost of the Japanese type, except that their features are more regular and delicate. They are descendants of the Saracen hordes which overran most of southern Gaul, and here and there found a foothold and left a race of descendants to tell the story. The Saracens of the Basque country were not warlike invaders, but peaceful ones who here took root, and to-day are known as Agotacs-Cascarotacs. It is not difficult to distinguish traces of African blood among them, just the least suspicion, and they have certain religious rites

"Le Chevalet"

and customs — seemingly pagan — which have nothing in common with either the Basques or the French. They are commonly considered as pariahs by other dwellers roundabout, but they have a certain individuality which would seem to preclude this. They are more like the " holy men " of India, than they are like mere alms beggars, and they have been known to occupy themselves more or less rudely with rough labour and agricultural pursuits. They have their own places in the churches, those who have not actually died off, for their numbers are growing less from day to day. It can be said, however, that — save the *cagots* and *cretins* — they are the least desirable and most unlikable people to be found in France to-day. They are not loathsome, like lepers or *cretins* or *goitreux,* but they are shunned by all mankind, and for the most part remain well hidden in obscure corners and culs-de-sac of the valleys away from the highroads.

The Spanish gypsies are numerous here in the Basque country, as might be expected. They do not differ greatly from the accepted gypsy type, but their marriage customs are curious. As a local authority on gypsy lore has put it: " an old pot serves as a *curé* and notary — *u bieilh toupi qu'ous sert de curé de nontari.*"

The marriageable couple, their parents and their friends, assemble in a wood, without priest or lawyer, or any ceremony which resembles an official or religious act. An earthenware pot is thrown in the air and the broken pieces, as it tumbles to the ground, are counted. The number of pieces indicate the duration of the partnership in years, each fragment counting for a year. Simple, isn't it!

CHAPTER XXVI

SAINT - JEAN - PIED - DE - PORT AND THE COL DE RONÇEVAUX

SAINT - JEAN - PIED - DE - PORT, the ancient capital of Basse-Navarre, is the gateway to one of the seven passes of the Pyrenees. To-day it is as quaint and unworldly as it was when capital of the province. Its aspect is truly venerable, and this in spite of the fact that it is the chief town of a canton, and transacts all the small business of the small officialdom of many square leagues of country within its walls.

There is no apparent approach to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, as one comes up the lower valley of the Nive; it all opens out as suddenly as if a curtain were withdrawn; everything enlarges and takes on colouring and animation.

The walled and bastioned little capital of other days was one of the *clés* of France in feudal times, and it lives well up to its traditions. Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port is a little town, red and rosy, as a Frenchman — certainly a

poet, or an artist — described it. There is no doubt but that it is a wonder of picturesqueness, and its old walls and its great arched gateway tell a story of mediævalism which one does not have to go to a picture fairy book to have explained. All is rosy, the complexions of the young Basque girls, their costumes, the brick and stone houses and gates, and the old bridge across the Nive; all is the colour of polished copper, some things paler and some deeper in tone, but all rosy red. There's no doubt about that!

Along the river bank the houses plunge directly into the water without so much as a skirt of shore-line. Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, its ancient ramparts and its river, is a combination of Bruges and Venice. Its *citadelle coiffe* tells of things that are militant, and its fifteenth-century church of those that are spiritual. Between the two comes much history of the days when the little bourg was the weight in the balance between French and Spanish Navarre.

The streets are calm, but brilliant with all the rare colourings of the artist's palette, not the least of these notes of colour being the milk jugs one sees everywhere hung out, strongly banded with great circles of burnished copper, and ornamented with a device of the royal

The Quaint Streets of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port

crown, the fleur-de-lis, the initial **H** and the following inscription: *" à le grand homme des pays béarnais et basques."* No one seems to know the exact significance of this milk jug symbolism, but the jugs themselves would make good souvenirs to carry away. All around is a wonderful wooded growth, fig-trees, laurels and all the semi-tropical flora usually associated with the Mediterranean countries, including the *châtaigniers,* whose product, the chestnut, is becoming more and more appreciated as an article of food.

Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port was, and is, the guardian of one of the most facile means of communication between France and Spain, the Route de Pamplona via Ronçevaux; facile because it has recently been rendered suitable for carriage traffic, whereas, save the coast routes on the east and west, no other is practicable.

In 1523 the great tower and fortifications of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port were razed by order of the king of Navarre. The decree, dated and signed from *" notre château de Pau,"* read in part thus: —

" Know you that the demolition of the walls of the city of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port is not made for any case of crime or felony or suspicion against the inhabitants . . . and that we

consider said inhabitants still as good, faithful vassals and loyal subjects."

The existing monuments of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port are many, though no royal residences are left to remind one of the days when kings and queens tarried within its walls. Instead one must be content with the knowledge that the city grew up from a Roman bourg which in the ninth century was replaced with the predecessor of the later capital. Its name, even in this early day, was Saint-Jean-le-Vieux, and it was not until the eleventh or twelfth centuries that the present city took form, founded doubtless by the Garcias, who were then kings of all Navarre. Saint-Jean belonged to Spain, as did all the province on the northern slope of the Pyrenees, until the treaty of 1659, and the capital of the kingdom was Pamplona.

Under the three reigns preceding the French Revolution the city was the capital of French Navarre, but the French kings, some time before, as we have seen, deserted it for more sumptuous and roomy quarters at Pau, which became the capital of Béarn and Navarre.

The chief architectural characteristics, an entrancing mélange of French and Spanish, are the remaining ramparts and their ogive-arched gates, the Vieux Pont and its fortified

gateway, and the fifteenth and sixteenth century church. The local fête (August fifteenth-eighteenth) is typical of the life of the Basques of the region, and reminiscent, in its "charades," "bals champêtres," "parties de pelote," "mascarades," and "danses allegoriques" of the traditions of the past.

Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port lies in the valley of the Nive, and St. Étienne-de-Baigorry, just over the crest of the mountains, fifteen kilometres away, in the Val de Baigorry, is the chief town of a commune more largely peopled than that presided over by Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. Really the town is but a succession of hamlets or quarters, but it is interesting because of its church, with its great nave reserved exclusively for women, even to-day — as was the ancient Basque custom — and the Château d'Echaux sitting above the town.

The château was the property of the ancient Vicomtes of Baigorry, and is a genuine mediæval structure, with massive flanking towers and a surrounding park.

One of the Vicomtes de Baigorry, Bertrand d'Echaux, was also bishop of Bayonne, and afterwards almoner to Louis XIII. That monarch proposed to Pope Urban VIII to make

his almoner a cardinal, but death overtook him first.

The nephew of this Bertrand d'Echaux, Jean d'Olce, was also a bishop of Bayonne, and it was to him, in the church of St. Jean de Luz, fell the honour of giving the nuptial benediction to Louis XIV and the Infanta Marie-Thérèse upon their marriage.

The Château de Baigorry of the Echaux belonged later to the Comte Harispe, one of the architects of the military glory of France. He first engaged in warfare as a simple volunteer, but died *senateur, comte,* and *maréchal* of France.

There is a first class legend connected with the daughter of the chatelain of D'Echaux. A certain warrior, baron of the neighbouring château of Lasse, became enamoured of the daughter of the Seigneur d'Echaux, Vicomte de Baigorry, and in spite of the reputation of the suitor of being cruel and ungallant the vicomte would not willingly refuse the hand of his daughter to so valiant a warrior, so the young girl — though it was against her own wish — became la Baronne de Lasse.

The marriage bell echoed true for a comparatively long period; it was said that the soft character of the lady had tempered the

despotism of her husband. One day a young follower of Thibaut, Comte de Champagne, returning from Pamplona in Spain, knocked at the door of the Château de Lasse and demanded hospitality, as was his chevalier's right. The young knight and Madame la Baronne fell in love at first sight, but not without exciting the suspicions of the baron, who, by a subterfuge, caught the loving pair in their guilt. He threw himself upon the young gallant, pierced his heart with a dagger-thrust, cut him into pieces, and threw them into the moat outside the castle walls.

An improvised court of justice was held in the great hall of the castle, and the vassals, fearing the wrath of their overlord, condemned the unhappy woman to death, by being interred in a dungeon cave and allowed to starve.

When the Vicomte de Baigorry heard of this, he marched forthwith against his hard-hearted son-in-law, and after a long siege took the château. Just previously the baron committed suicide, anticipating the death that would have awaited him. This is tragedy as played in mediæval times.

Between Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port and Saint-Etienne-de-Baigorry, just by the side of the road, is the ruined château of Farges, a famous

establishment in the days of the first Napoleon's empire, though a hot-bed of political intrigue. Its architectural charms are not many or great, the garden is neglected, and the gates are off their hinges. The whole resembles those Scotch manors now crumbling into ruin, of which Sir Walter has given so many descriptions. At Ascarat, too, is a house bearing a sculpture of a cross, a mitre, and two mallets interlaced on its façade, with the date 1292. It is locally called "La Maison Ancienne," but the present occupant has given it frequent coats of whitewash and repaired things here and there until it looks like quite a modern structure.

Above Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, on the road to Arnéguy, is the little hamlet of Lasse, with a church edifice of no account, but with a ruined château donjon that possesses a historic, legendary past. It recalls the name of the baron who had that little affair with the daughter of the Vicomte de Baigorry.

In the heart of the Pyrenees, twenty kilometres above Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, is Val Carlos and the Col de Roncevaux, where fell Roland and Archbishop Turpin in that bloody rout of Charlemagne. Blood flowed in rivers. Literature more than history, though the event

was epoch-making in the latter sense, has made the story famous. The French call it a *drame militaire,* and this, as well as anything, gives a suggestion of its spectacular features all so fully set forth in a cycle of chivalrous legends in the famous Song of Roland.

The Alps divide their warlike glories with Napoleon and Hannibal, but the Pyrenees will ever have Charlemagne for their deity, because of this affair at Ronçevaux. Charlemagne dominated everything with his "host of Christendom," and the people on the Pyrenees say today: "There are three great noises — that of the torrent, that of the wind in the pines, and that of the army of Charlemagne." He did what all wise commanders should do; he held both sides of his defensive frontier.

> "When Charlemagne had given his anger room,
> And broken Saragossa beneath his doom,
> And bound the valley of Ebro under a bond,
> And into Christendom christened Bramimond."

All who recall the celebrated retreat of Charlemagne and the shattering of his army, and the Paladin Roland, by the rocks rolled down upon them by the Basques will have vivid emotions as they stand here above the magnificent gorge

of Val Carlos and contemplate one of the celebrated battle-fields of history.

The abbey of Ronçevaux, a celebrated and monumental convent, has been famous long years in history. The *royale et insigne collegiale,* as it was known, was one of the most celebrated sanctuaries in Christendom, and takes its place immediately after the shrines of Jerusalem, Rome, and St. Jacques de Compostelle, under the immediate protection of the Holy See, and under the direct patronage of the king of Spain, who nominates the prior. This dignitary and six canons are all that exist today of the ancient military order of Ronçevaux, called by the Spanish Ronçevalles, and by the Basques Orhia.

There's not much else at Ronçevaux save the monastery and its classic Gothic architectural splendours, a few squalid houses, and an inn where one may see as typical a Spanish kitchen as can be found in the depths of the Iberian peninsula. Here are all the picturesque Spanish accessories that one reads of in books and sees in pictures, soldiers playing guitars, and muleteers dancing the fandango, with, perhaps, a Carmencita or a Mercédès looking on or even dancing herself.

Pamplona in Spain, the old kingly capital

of Navarre, is eighty kilometres distant. One leaves Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port by diligence at eleven in the morning, takes *déjeuner* at Val Carlos, and at two in the afternoon takes the Spanish diligence and sleeps at Burgette, leaving again at four in the morning and arriving at Pamplona at eight.

This is a classic excursion and ought to be made by all who visit the Pyrenees. Val Carlos is the Spanish customs station, and soon after one passes through the magnificent rocky Défile de Val Carlos and finally over the crest of the Pyrenees by either the Port d'Ibañeta or the Col de Ronçevaux, at a height of one thousand and fifty-seven metres.

The route from Ronçevaux to Pamplona is equally as good on Spanish soil as it was on French — an agreeable surprise to those who have thought the good roads' movement had not " arrived " in Spain.

The diligence may not be an ideally comfortable means of travel, but at least it's a romantic one, and has some advantages over driving from Saint Jean in your own, or a hired, conveyance, as an expostulating Frenchman we met had done. He freed the frontier all right enough, but within a few kilometres was arrested by a roving Spanish officer who turned

him back to the official-looking building — which he had no right to pass without stopping anyway — labelled "Aduana Nacional" in staring letters, that any passer-by might read without straining his eyes.

"Surely he would never have driven by in this manner," said the dutiful functionary, "unless he was intending to sell the horse and carriage and all that therein was, without acquitting the lawful rights which would enable a royal government to present a decent fiscal balance sheet."

Pamplona is the end of our itinerary, and was the capital of Spanish Navarre. It's not at all a bad sort of a place, and while it doesn't look French in the least, it is no more primitive than many a French city or town of its pretentions. It has a population of thirty thousand, is the seat of a bishop, has a fine old cathedral, a bull ring — which is a sight to see on the fête day of San Sebastian (January twentieth) — and a hotel called *La Perla* which by its very name is a thing of quality.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE VALLEY OF THE NIVE

There is no more gracious little river valley in all France than that of the Nive, as it flows from fabled Roncevaux by Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, Bidarray and Cambo, to the Gulf of Gascony, down through the fertile Pyrenean slopes. Ronsard sang of the Loir at Vendome and his rhymes have become classic; but much of the phrasing might apply here. All about is a profound verdure, a majesty, and a magnificence of colour which will ravish the heart of an artist, be he realist or impressionist. From the very first, the Nive flows between banks wide and sinuous, and in its lower reaches, between Cambo and the sea, takes on an amplitude that many longer and more pretentious streams lack utterly. By a rock-cut way, the Nive passes from French Navarre into the Pays de Labourd, an ancient fief of feudal times, between Cambo and the Pas de Roland.

The legend which has perpetuated the death

of Roland and so many of the rear-guard of Charlemagne's army gives an extraordinary interest to this otherwise striking region. Here the Nive narrows its banks and tumbles itself about in a veritable fury of foam, and whether the sword stroke of the Paladin Roland made the passage possible, as it did in the famous "Brèche," or not has little to do with one of the strikingly sentimental episodes of legendary history. If it took place anywhere likely enough it happened here also.

Between the Pas de Roland and Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port one passes Bidarray and a curious donkey-back bridge, and the famous Bassin de Bidarray, famous only because it is a cavern underground, for it does not differ greatly in appearance from others of its family. Above Bidarray is the superb cone of Mondarrain, crowned with the ruins of a feudal castle.

The following legend of a dragon who once lived in a cavern on the banks of the Nive is worthy of preserving in print; at any rate it sounds plausible, as told the writer by an old dealer in *bérets* and *sabots*. He had an eye for the picturesque, though, and if his facts are correct he would make a very good historian.

A young Bayonnais went out one day to attack this fabled monster whom no one yet had

been able to kill. By name he was Gaston Armaud de Belzunc, and his father was governor of Bayonne in 1372.

After a day and a half of journeying, the young Tartarin of other days came upon his quarry. The beast, furious, jumped upon the cavalier and threw him to the ground, but his lance pierced the scaly neck and so weakened the monster that man and beast grappled together. The two died, and Gaston's companions, who had ungallantly fled precipitately at the first encounter, found them later laced in each other's embrace.

To perpetuate the memory of this act of bravery, the king of Navarre granted the family De Belzunc the privilege of adding a dragon to its arms. Up to the Revolution there existed a fund in behalf of the clergy of a Bayonne church to pray for the repose of the soul of this gallant young knight of the Middle Ages.

High above the banks of the upper reaches of the Nive are the grim ruins of the Château de Laustan. Practically it was, in its palmy days, a fortress-château. It was built by the Seigneur de Laustan, who possessed great privileges in the neighbourhood, to turn the tide of aggression of his jealous neighbours, and of the Spaniards. It was constructed of a sort

of red sandstone, with walls of great thickness, as evidences show to-day, and must have been a very successful feudal habitation of its class. The family De Laustan was one of the most celebrated in Basse-Navarre. It gave three archbishops to Spain, and its archives are now kept in the royal library at Madrid.

Cambo, in the mid-valley of the Nive, is as delightful a spot of its class as is marked on any map, far more so than many pretentious resorts where bridge, baccarat and the bumptious pretence of its habitués are the chief characteristics.

Cambo is simple, but pleasant, and besides its quiet, peaceful delights it has two historical institutions which are as un-French as they are really and truly Basque. First: its remarkable church, with its golden *rétable* and its galleries surrounding the nave, is something distinctively local, as is also its churchyard. The other feature is the court or *fronton* where is played the *jeu de paume,* or, to give it its Basque nomenclature, *pelota.* Here meet from time to time, all through the year, the most famous players of the French Basque country and of Guipuzcoa, the chief Spanish centre, across the border.

This game of *pelota* is the passion of the Basques, but as the habitant says, " the game

plays out the player, and in four or five years his suppleness disappears, his muscles become hardened, and he is superannuated."

Still one cannot get away from the fact that Cambo's present-day vogue is wholly due to the coming of Edmond Rostand. It was famous before, among a select few, but the craze is on, and the land-boomer and the resort-exploiter have already marked its acres for their own.

Rostand's country home "Arnaga" is something like a palace of an Arabian Nights tale. The walls of the apartments, whose windows look out over the crests of the Pyrenees, are covered with paintings by some of the most celebrated French artists. One room has a decorated frieze taken from the ever-delightful tales immortalized by Andersen and the Grimm brothers, and the gem of this poet's dwelling is Madame Rostand's boudoir. Familiar stories of "Cinderella" and the "Beauty and the Beast" are told again, with a wealth of colour and fantasy, by that whimsical artist Jean Weber.

This artistic retreat is a happy combination of Byzantine palace and Basque chalet. Here Rostand lives part of the year, with his wife and son, in a retirement only broken to receive a friend, who is supposed never to speak of

the strenuous life. To escape from the continual excitement of city life and the feverish fashionable resorts, and also to be able to devote himself entirely to work, the creator of "Cyrano" fled to this spot eight years ago. Arnaga is not constructed along the conventional lines of the French château, but looks rather like a Moorish palace as it stands on a high hill, surrounded by parks and terraces, and the wonderful Basque landscape. On one side the castle or palace, or château, or whatever you choose to call it, overlooks a verdant plain sprinkled with semi-tropical blossoms and watered by the winding stream of the Nive. On the other rise the majestic Pyrenees, which, in the glory of the southern sunset, flush to a deep crimson and then pale to a sombre purple.

Surely it is an ideal spot and will be till the madding crowd comes and sets this ideal litterateurs' and artists' retreat in an uproar, as it did Étretat and St. Raphael in the days of Alphonse Karr.

Rostand's earnings as a dramatist might not suffice to keep up such a pretentious establishment, but since he is married to the daughter of a Paris banker the thing seems simpler.

"The fame of Cambo is only just coming to be widespread. This is due to the fact that

the great poet and playwright whose fame rests upon having invented a *papier-maché* nose for his chief creation has made it so." This was the rather unkindly criticism of a brother professional (a French playwright) jealous, presumably, of Rostand's fame, and must not be taken seriously.

Rostand's house is one of the sights of Cambo, but as a Frenchman wrote: "*M. Rostand n'est pas toujours à sa fenêtre.*" Still the house is there and those who would worship at the shrine from without may do so.

To get in and out of Cambo one passes over a tiny bridge, so narrow that one conveyance must wait while another crosses. As the same observant Frenchman said: "No wonder M. Rostand does not quit Cambo if he has to cross a bridge like this!" Automobiles especially have an annoying time of it, and the new "automobile *corne quadruple*" as it whistles out the famous air: "*Je suis le pâtre des montagnes,*" will not turn a Basque peasant and his donkey aside once the latter has set his forefoot on the curious old bridge.

At Cambo the bathing establishment is in a half-hidden, tree-grown corner on the banks of the transparent Nive.

Cambo, in spite of having "arrived" to a

position of affluence and popularity, is but a commune of the canton of Espelette, whose market-town itself has but a population of fifteen hundred souls, though it draws half as many again to its bosom each bi-weekly market day, mostly Basques from Spain. Espelette is full of curious old Basque houses, and its manners and customs are quaint and queer; in short it is most interesting, though if you stop for lunch at any one of its four or five little inns you will most likely want to get back to Cambo by diligence for the night. Espelette's chief industry is tanning leather and making those curious Basque shoes called *espadrilles*.

Above Cambo, a dozen kilometres, are the Châteaux Teillery and Itxassou. Itxassou possesses a richly endowed church, with an entire silver-gilt altar, the gift of a " Basque-Americain " of the eighteenth century, Pedro d'Echegaray.

CHAPTER XXVIII

BAYONNE: ITS PORT AND ITS WALLS

The foundation of Bayonne is lost in the obscurity of ages, but it was the capital of the Basque country.

Three distinct *quartiers* are formed by the flowing waters of the Nive and the Adour, communication being by a series of exceedingly picturesque, if not exactly serviceable, bridges.

The bridges of Bayonne are famous in the eyes of artists, and lovers of damp, moss-grown and weathered masonry, but an engineer of this age of steel would consider them inefficient abominations, and not at all suited to a great port and sous-préfecture such as Bayonne.

One of the finest works of Vauban, the fortress builder, was the defences of Bayonne. The walls and ramparts were exceedingly efficacious in times past (though to-day they look flimsy enough), and crowning all, was a superb fortress at the juncture of the two rivers which come together here, flowing from the fastnesses of the Pyrenees to the sea.

The Allées Marines at Bayonne, a sort of tree-covered jetty-promenade, are a unique feature in civic embellishment. The water-gate at Bordeaux is fine, and so is the Thames Embankment in London, and the Battery in New York, but those Allées at Bayonne lead them all.

The Adour, coursing its way to the sea down through Bayonne, was fickle enough one day to leave its bed, and force an outlet three leagues or more away, threatening disaster to Bayonne's port. The citizens rose in might and took counsel, and decided that something must be done or they would die of sheer ennui, if not

A Gateway of Bayonne

of poverty. There came to the rescue one Louis de Foix, the same who had been the architect of Spain's Escurial, and in 1579 he harnessed the water's flow and returned it to its ancient bed.

Bayonne glories in the fact that she has never submitted to a foreign yoke, and when taken from the English, who had usurped it as a Plantagenet birthright, by Charles VII, in the fifteenth century, the people of Bayonne recognized that they had come to their own again through the efforts of their fellow Basques. The city's device "*Nunquam Polluta*" is distinctly appropriate.

It was to Bayonne that François Premier came to meet his court, after his days of imprisonment at Madrid, as the hostage of his old enemy Charles V. He was confined only in the luxuriously appointed palace at Madrid, but, as he himself said, "the cage was none the less a cage for being gilded."

Here at Bayonne awaited François' mother, his sister Marguerite, and a gay court of followers, not forgetting "a brilliant *parterre* of young beauties assembled in their train," as Du Bellay puts it.

François' adoration for "brilliant *parterres*" of young ladies was ever one of his

failings, and the master of ceremonies of the temporary court of Bayonne thought enough of his position to get together an entrancing bevy, the most beautiful among them all being the famous Anne de Pisseleu, she who was afterwards to become the Duchesse d'Étampes. Diane de Poitiers was there too, having come to Bayonne as lady in waiting to the regent, but it was Anne de Pisseleu who won François' favour of the moment, and he even allowed her to publicly refer to the insistent Diane as "an old hag," and declare that she herself was born on Diane's wedding day. This was after he had put aside Diane.

Vicomte d'Orth was governor of Bayonne on that dread Bartholomew's night when the tocsin rang out all over the French domain. He wrote to Charles IX as follows, showing the fidelity and steadfastness of the people of these parts, when in more frigid climes they lost their heads in an uncontrollable fury:

"I have communicated the letter of your Majesty to the garrison, and to the inhabitants of the city; I have found only brave soldiers and good citizens and not a single murderer."

Bayonne to-day is frankly commercial; its docks and wharves are possessed of a considerable deep-sea traffic; and one sees three-

masters from the Banks of Newfoundland, and cargo-boats from Senegal, side by side at its quays. It is, too, the distributing depot for the whole Basque country, the chief market where the peasant goes to buy Seth Thomas clocks and Smith and Wesson revolvers, each made in Belgium most likely; in England and America the cry is "made in Germany;" in France, it's "made in Belgium."

All of the Basque country, and a part of Béarn, depend on Bayonne for certain supplies; even Biarritz and Saint-Jean-de-Luz are but its satellites.

Walckenaer's "Géographie des Gauls" says the evolution of the name Bayonne was from the Basque Lapurdam, "city of thieves," but nothing to-day about her warm welcome for strangers justifies this, so it were best forgot. Bayonne in the old days — and to some extent to-day — spoke intermittently Gascon, Français, Béarnais and Spanish, and it is this notable blend of peoples and tongues that makes it so charming.

The *Quartier Landais* was the mother city of Bayonne, the oldest portion out of which the other faubourgs grew. Within the old walls, and in the narrow streets, all is mediæval even now, but in the newer quarters the straight,

rectangular lines of streets and sidewalks are, as the French call them, *à l'Américaine.*

The Pont Mayou at Bayonne is the liveliest, gayest spot in all the Basque country. It is the virtual centre of this ancient capital.

Bayonne's cathedral is lovely enough when viewed from afar, particularly the ensemble of its spires with the roof-tops of the town — a sort of reminiscence of Nuremberg — and this in spite of the fact that Taine in his description of it called it ugly.

In the olden times, the city had an important Jewish quarter, whose inhabitants were an overflow of those expelled from Spain and Portugal. This little city of the Landes became a miniature Frankfort, and had three synagogues where the rabbis held services in the Spanish tongue. The phenomenon has disappeared, by a process of evolution and infusion, and one no more remarks the Jewish type as at all distinct from the Basque.

An incident happened at Bayonne fort during the Peninsular War which seems to have been greatly neglected by historians, though Gleig, the novelist, in "The Subaltern," makes much of it. The English, believing that peace had been declared, resented an unprovoked French sortie from Bayonne's citadel on the tenth of

April, 1814. This was the last British fight on French soil, if fight it was. A number of the guards, including four officers, died of wounds received at this engagement.

The following anonymous verses tell the story well:

"For England here they fell.
Yon sea-like water guards each hero's grave.
Far Pyrenean heights, mindful, attest
That here our bravest and our best
Their supreme proof of love and loyalty gave,
Dying for England well.

"Among those distant heights,
Had many a day the wrathful cannon roared.
Through black ravine and sunny field of Spain
War's headlong torrent rolled amain.
Irun's defile and Bidassoa's ford
Beheld a hundred fights.

"Last, by this sea-like wave,
Threatening the fort our martial lines were drawn.
Fierce broke upon their watch at midnight hour
The swift sortie, the bullets' shower.
Red carnage ceased with slowly wakening dawn.
France keeps the true and brave."

A kilometre or two outside the walls of Bayonne — the same which defied the British in 1814 — is a guide-post bearing the inscription (the writer thinks in English) "To the Guards' Cemetery." Down a by-road around a turning

or two, and past a score of vine-clad cottages of Basque peasants one comes to the spot in question, a little railed-in plot of hallowed ground. Here are seen the original weather-worn headstones of nearly a century ago, and a newer series, practically replicas of the former.

There is also a tablet stating that on this spot stood the "Third Guards Camp." That is all. It resembles the conventional cemetery not at all, and may be considered a memorial, nothing more. Certainly there is nothing pathetic or sad about it, for all is green and bright and smiling. If one can put themselves in this mood it is certainly a good one in which to make a pilgrimage to a city of the dead.

There is another warlike reminiscence connected with Bayonne, which is worth recalling, and that is that Bayonne was the birthplace of the bayonet, as was Troyes (in France) the birthplace of that species of weights which is not avoirdupois.

A mid-Victorian writer in England criticized Dickens' story in *Household Words,* called "Perils of Certain English Prisoners," wherein the soldiers carried bayonets in their muskets and cartridges in their haversacks. This particular critic nodded, as they some-

times do. Cartridges were invented in 1586, and bayonets first made their appearance at Bayonne in 1641, and the scene of Dickens' tale was laid a hundred or two years later.

Those who think that York ham, which even the French know as *Jambon d'Yorck,* is a superlative sort of pig-product, should become acquainted with the *jambons de Bayonne,* from Basque pigs, cured with the natural salts of the commune of Salies. There is no room left for comparison with other hams. Those of Bayonne are the peers of their class, not forgetting even the sugar-cured variety of the Old Dominion.

There is a considerable chocolate business at Bayonne, too, though not with the interior, which mostly gets its supplies from Paris, but with the French colonies, notably with the tiny market of St. Pierre-et-Miquelon, which, by some business pact or reasoning, is held to be sacred to the chocolate manufacturers of Bayonne.

CHAPTER XXIX

BIARRITZ AND SAINT-JEAN-DE-LUZ

Biarritz and the Surrounding Country

If Bayonne is the centre of commercial affairs for the Basque country, its citizens must at any rate go to Biarritz if they want to live "the elegant and worldly life."

The prosperity and luxury of Biarritz is very

recent; it goes back only to the second empire, when it was but a village of a thousand souls or less, mostly fishermen and women.

The railway and the automobile omnibus make communication with Bayonne to-day easy, but formerly folk came and went on a donkey side-saddle for two, arranged back to back, like the seats on an Irish jaunting-car. If the weight were unequal a balance was struck by adding cobble-stones on one side or the other, the patient donkey not minding in the least. This astonishing mode of conveyance was known as a *cacolet,* and replaced the *voitures* and *fiacres* of other resorts. An occasional example may still be seen, but the *jolies Basquaises* who conducted them have given way to sturdy, bare-legged Basque boys — as picturesque perhaps, but not so entrancing to the view. To voyage "*en cacolet*" was the necessity of our grandfathers; for us it is an amusement only.

Napoleon III, or rather Eugénie, his spouse, was the faithful godfather of Biarritz as a resort. The Villa Eugénie is no more; it was first transformed into a hotel and later destroyed by fire; but it was the first of the great battery of villas and hotels which has made Biarritz so great that the popularity of Monte

Carlo is steadily waning. Biarritz threatens to become even more popular; some sixteen thousand visitors came to Biarritz in 1899, but there were thirty-odd thousand in 1903; while the permanent population has risen from two thousand, seven hundred in the days of the second empire to twelve thousand, eight hundred in 1901. The tiny railway from Bayonne to Biarritz transported half a million travellers twenty years ago, and a million and a half, or nearly that number in 1903; the rest, being millionaires, or gypsies, came in automobiles or caravans. These figures tell eloquently of the prosperity of this *villégiature impériale.*

The great beauty of Biarritz is its setting. At Monte Carlo the setting is also beautiful, ravishingly beautiful, but the architecture, the terrace, Monaco's rock and all the rest combine to make the pleasing ensemble. At Biarritz the architecture of its casino and the great hotels is not of an epoch-making beauty, neither are they so delightfully placed. It is the surrounding stage-setting that is so lovely. Here the jagged shore line, the blue waves, the ample horizon seaward, are what make it all so charming.

Biarritz as a watering-place has an all the year round clientèle; in summer the Spanish

Blanche McManus

and the French, succeeded in winter by Americans, Germans, and English — with a sprinkling of Russians at all times.

Biarritz, like Pau, aside from being a really delightful winter resort, where one may escape the rigours of murky November to March in London, is becoming afflicted with a bad case of *la fièvre du sport*. There are all kinds of sports, some of them reputable enough in their place, but the comic-opera fox-hunting which takes place at Pau and Biarritz is not one of them. It is entirely out of place in this delightful southland, and most disconcerting it is as you are strolling out from Biarritz some bright January or February morning, along the St.-Jean-de-Luz road, to be brushed to one side by a cantering lot of imitation sportsmen and women from overseas, and shouted at as if you had no rights. This is bad enough, but it is worse to have to hear the talk of the cafés and hotel lounging-rooms, which is mostly to the effect that a fox was "uncovered" near the ninetieth kilometre stone on the Route d'Espagne, and the "kill" was brought off in the little chapel of the Penitents Blanc, where, for a moment, you once loitered and rested watching the blue waves of the Golfe of Gascogne roll in at your feet. It is indeed disconcerting,

this eternal interpolation of inappropriate manners and customs which the *grand monde* of society and sport (*sic*) is trying to carry round with it wherever it goes.

To what banal depths a jaded social world can descend to keep amused — certainly not edified — is gathered from the following description of a "gymkhana" held at Biarritz at a particularly silly period of a silly season. It was not a French affair, by the way, but gotten up by visitors.

The events which attracted the greatest interest were the "*Concours d'addresse,*" and the "pig-sticking." For the first of these, a very complicated and intricate course was laid out, over which had to be driven an automobile, and as it contained almost every obstacle and difficulty that can be conceived for a motor-car — except a police trap, the strength and quality (?) of the various cars as well as the skill (??) of the drivers, were put to a very severe test. Mr ——— was first both in "tilting at the ring" and in the "pig-sticking" contests, the latter being the *best* item of the show. One automobile, with that *rara avis,* a flying (air-inflated dummy) pig attached to it, started off, hotly pursued by another, with its owner, lance in hand, sitting beside the chauffeur. The air-

inflated quarry in the course of its wild career performed some curious antics which provoked roars of laughter. Of course every one was delighted and edified at this display of wit and brain power. The memory of it will probably last at Biarritz until somebody suggests an automobile race with the drivers and passengers clad in bathing suits.

The gambling question at Biarritz has, in recent months, become a great one. There have been rumours that it was all to be done away with, and then again rumours that it would still continue. Finally there came the Clemenceau law, which proposed to close all public gambling-places in France, and the smaller "establishments" at Biarritz shut their doors without waiting to learn the validity of the law, but the Municipal Casino still did business at the old stand.

The mayor of Biarritz has made strenuous representations to the Minister of the Interior at Paris in favour of keeping open house at the Basque watering-place, urging that the town would suffer, and Monte Carlo and San Sebastian would thrive at its expense. This is probably so, but as the matter is still in abeyance, it will be interesting to see how the situation is handled by the authorities.

The picturesque " Plage des Basques " lies to the south of the town, bordered with high cliffs, which in turn are surmounted with terraces of villas. The charm of it all is incomparable. To the northwest stretches the limpid horizon of the Bay of Biscay, and to the south the snowy summits of the Pyrenees, and the adorable Bays of Saint-Jean-de-Luz and Fontarabie, while behind, and to the eastward, lies the quaint country of the Basques, and the mountain trails into Spain in all their savage hardiness.

The offshore translucent waters of the Gulf of Gascony were the *Sinus Aquitanicus* of the ancients. A colossal rampart of rocks and sand dunes stretches all the way from the Gironde to the Bidassoa, without a harbour worthy of the name save at Bayonne and Saint-Jean-de-Luz. Here the Atlantic waves pound, in time of storm, with all the fury with which they break upon the rocky coasts of Brittany further north. Perhaps this would not be so, but for the fact that the Iberian coast to the southward runs almost at right angles with that of Gascony. As it is, while the climate is mild, Biarritz and the other cities on the coasts of the Gulf of Gascony have a fair proportion of

what sailors the world over call "rough weather."

The waters of the Gascon Gulf are not always angry; most frequently they are calm and blue, vivid with a translucence worthy of those of Capri, and it is that makes the "Plage de Biarritz" one of the most popular sea-bathing resorts in France to-day. It is a fashionable watering-place, but it is also, perhaps, the most beautifully disposed city to be found in all the round of the European coast line, its slightly curving slope dominated by a background terrace decorative in itself, but delightfully set off with its fringe of dwelling-houses, hotels and casinos. Ostend is superbly laid out, but it is dreary; Monte Carlo is beautiful, but it is *ultra;* while Trouville is constrained and affected. Biarritz has the best features of all these.

The fishers of Biarritz, living mostly in the tiny houses of the Quartier de l'Atalaye, like the Basque sailors of Bayonne and Saint-Jean-de-Luz, pursue their trade to the seas of Iceland and Spitzbergen.

As a whaling-port, before Nantucket and New Bedford were discovered by white men, Biarritz was famous. A "*lettre patent*" of Henri

IV gave a headquarters to the whalers of the old Basque seaport in the following words:

"Un lieu sur la coste de la mer Oceane, qu'il se decouvre de six et set lieus, tous les navaires et barques qui entrent et sortent de la coste d'Espaiñe."

A dozen miles or so south of Biarritz is Saint-Jean-de-Luz. The coquettish little city saw in olden times the marriage of Louis XIV and Marie Thérèse of Spain, one of the most brilliant episodes of the eighteenth century. In the town is still pointed out the Maison Lohabiague, a queer little angle-towered house, not in the least pretentious, where lived for a time the future queen and Anne d'Autriche as well. It is called to-day the Maison de l'Infante.

There is another historic edifice here known as the Château Louis XIV, built by him as a residence for occupation "on the day of his marriage." It was a whim, doubtless, but a worthy one.

St.-Jean-de-Luz has become a grand pleasure resort, and its picturesque port has little or no commercial activity save such as is induced by its being a safe port of shelter to which ships may run when battled by adverse winds and waves as they ply up and down the

St.-Jean-de-Luz

coasts of the Gascon Gulf. The ancient marine opulence of the port has disappeared entirely, and the famous *goëlettes Basques,* or what we would call schooners, which hunted whales and fished for cod in far-off waters in the old days, and lent a hand in marine warfare when it was on, are no more. All the waterside activity to-day is of mere offshore fishing-boats.

Vauban had planned that Saint-Jean-de-Luz should become a great fortified port. Its situation and surroundings were admirably suited to such a condition, but the project was abandoned by the authorities long years since.

The fishing industry of Saint-Jean-de-Luz is very important. First there is *"la grande pêche,"* carried on offshore by several small steamers and large *chaloupes,* and bringing to market sardines, anchovies, tunny, roach, and *dorade.* Then there is *"la petite pêche,"* which gets the shallow-bottom fish and shellfish, such as lobsters, prawns, etc. The traffic in anchovies is considerable, and is carried on by the coöperative plan, the captain or owner of the boat taking one part, the owner of the nets three parts of one quarter of the haul; and the other three-quarters of the entire produce being divided equally among the crew.

Similar arrangements, on slightly varying terms, are made as to other classes of fish.

Saint-Jean-de-Luz had a population of ten thousand two centuries ago; to-day it has three thousand, and most of those take in boarders, or in one way or another cater to the hordes of visitors who have made of it — or would if they could have suppressed its quiet Basque charm of colouring and character — a little Brighton.

Not all is lost, but four hundred houses were razed in the mid-eighteenth century by a tempest, and the stable population began to creep away; only with recent years an influx of strangers has arrived for a week's or a month's stay to take their places — if idling butterflies of fashion or imaginary invalids can really take the place of a hard-working, industrious colony of fishermen, who thought no more of sailing away to the South Antarctic or the Banks of Newfoundland in an eighty-ton whaler than they did of seining sardines from a shallop in the Gulf of Gascony at their doors.

Enormous and costly works have been done here at Saint-Jean-de-Luz since its hour of glory began with the marriage of Louis XIV with the Infanta of Spain, just after the celebrated Treaty of the Pyrenees.

The ambitious Louis would have put up his equipage and all his royal train at Bayonne, but the folk of Saint-Jean would hear of nothing of the sort. The mere fact that Saint-Jean could furnish fodder for the horses, and Bayonne could not, was the inducement for the royal cortège to rest here. Because of this event, so says tradition, the king's equerries caused the great royal portal of the church to be walled up, that other royalties — and mere plebeians — might not desecrate it. History is not very ample on this point, but local legend supplies what the general chronicle ignores.

On the banks of the Nivelle, in the days of Louis XIII, were celebrated shipyards which turned out ships of war of three hundred or more tons, to battle for their king against Spain. In 1627, too, Saint-Jean-de-Luz furnished fifty ships to Richelieu to break the blockade of the Ile of Ré, then being sustained by the English.

One recalls here also the sad affair of the Connétable de Bourbon, his conspiracy against the king of France, and how when his treachery was discovered he fled from court, and, "accompanied by a band of gentlemen," galloped off toward the Spanish frontier. Here at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, almost at the very entrance of the

easiest gateway into Spain through the Pyrenees, Bourbon was last seen straining every power and nerve to escape those who were on his trail, and every wit he possessed to secure an alliance with the Spanish on behalf of his tottering cause.

"By Our Lady," said the king, "such treason is a blot upon knighthood. Bourbon a man as great as ourselves! Can he not be apprehended ere he crosses the frontier?" But no, Bourbon, for the time, was safe enough, though he met his death in Italy at the siege of Rome and his projected Spanish alliance never came off anyway.

Ten or twelve kilometres beyond Saint-Jean-de-Luz is Urrugne and its clock tower. Victor Hugo rhymed it thus:

"... Urrugne,
Nom rauque dont le nom a la rime répugne,"

and his words, and the Latin inscription on its face, have served to make this little Basque village celebrated.

"Vulnerant omnes, ultima necat."

Travellers by diligence in the old days, passing on the "Route Royale" from France to Spain, stopped to gaze at the *Horloge d'Ur-*

rugne, and took the motto as something personal, in view of the supposed dangers of travelling by road. To-day the automobilist and the traveller by train alike, rush through to Hendaye, with never a thought except as to what new form of horror the customs inspection at the frontier will bring forth.

Urrugne is worth being better known, albeit it is but a dull little Basque village of a couple of thousand inhabitants, for in addition it has a country inn which is excellent of its kind, if primitive. All around is a delightful, green-grown landscape, from which, however, the vine is absent, the humidity and softness of the climate not being conducive to the growth of the grape. In some respects the country resembles Normandy, and the Basques of these parts, curiously enough, produce cider, of an infinitesimal quantity to be sure, compared to the product of Normandy or Brittany, but enough for the home consumption of those who affect it.

CHAPTER XXX

THE BIDASSOA AND THE FRONTIER

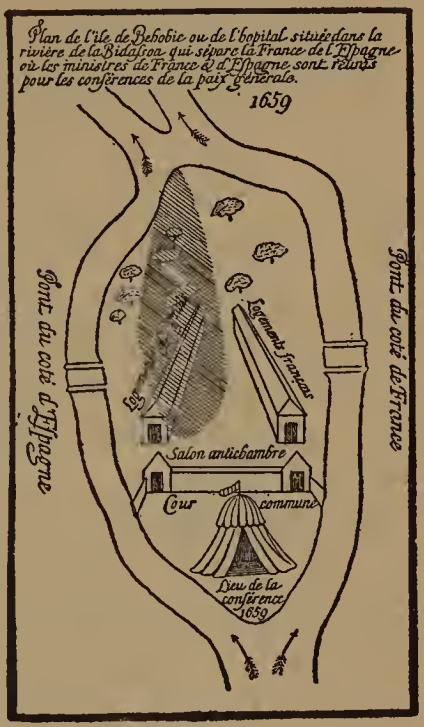
In the western valleys of the Pyrenees, opening out into the Landes bordering upon the Golfe de Gascogne, rises the little river Bidassoa, famous in history and romance. To the Basques its name is Bastanzubi, and its length is but sixty-five kilometres.

In the upper valley, in Spanish territory, is Elizondo, the tiny capital of olden times, and three other tiny Spanish towns whose names suggest nothing but an old-world existence.

In its last dozen or fifteen kilometres the Bidassoa forms the boundary between France and Spain, and mid-stream — below Hendaye, the last French station on the railway between Paris and Madrid — is the famous Ile des Faisans.

All of this is classic ground. Just across the river from Hendaye is Irun, the first station on the Spanish railway line. It offers nothing special in the way of historical monuments, save a fourteenth-century Hôtel de Ville and

innumerable old houses. Its characteristics are as much French as Spanish, and its speech the same, when its people don't talk Basque.


Plan de l'île de Behobie ou de l'hopital situé dans la rivière de la Bidassoa qui sépare la France de l'Espagne où les ministres de France & d'Espagne sont reunis pour les conférences de la paix generale.
1659
Pont du coté d'Espagne
Pont du coté de France
Logements français
Eglise
Salon antichambre
Cour
commune
Lieu de la conférence 1659

Ile des Faisans

A historic incident of the Ile des Faisans was the famous affair of 1526, when, after the Battle of Pavia, and François Premier had been made prisoner by Charles V, the former was *exchanged* against his two children as hostages.

Three years later the children themselves were redeemed by another *exchange,* this time of much gold and many precious "relics," as one learns from the old chronicles.

In 1615, on the same classic spot, as far from Spanish territory as from French, Anne of Austria, the fiancée of Louis XIII, was put into the hands of the French by the Spanish, who received in return Elizabeth of France, fian-

cée of Philippe III. Quite a mart the Ile des Faisans had become! The culminating event was the signing of the celebrated Traité des Pyrénées, on November 7th, 1659.

When François Premier, fleeing from Madrid, where he had been the prisoner of Charles V, first set foot upon French soil again at this imaginary boundary line, he said: "At last I am a king again! Now I am really free." It was only through the efforts of his sister that François was able to escape his royal jailer. He had made promises which he did not intend to live up to; the king perjured himself but he saved France.

He rode with all speed from Madrid to meet his boys, the Dauphin and the Duc d'Orleans, who were to replace him as hostages at Madrid. On the river's edge the sons were awaiting their father, with an emotion too vivid for description. They had no fear, and they entered willingly into the plan which was laid down for them, but the meeting and the parting was most sad. Wild with excitement of liberty being so near, François could hardly wait for the ferry to take him across, and even waded into the river to meet it as they pulled towards it. On French soil a splendid retinue awaited him,

and once more the French king was surrounded by his luxurious court.

To-day the Island of Pheasants is hardly more than a sand bar, and Mazarin and Don Louis de Haro, and their numerous suites would have a hard time finding a foothold. The currents of the river and the ocean have made of it only a pinhead on modern maps. In 1856, at the expense of the two countries, a stone memorial, with an inscription in French and Spanish, was erected to mark the site of this fast dwindling island.

Irun and Feuntarrabia, with the three French communes of Biriaton, Béhobie and Hendaye enjoy reciprocal rights over the waters of the estuary of this epoch and history making river. This is the result of an agreement of long years standing, known as the "Pacte de Famille," an agreement made between the French and Spanish Basques (those of the *béret bleu* with the *béret rouge*) with the concurrence of the French and Spanish authorities.

Crossing the Pont International between France and Spain may prove to be an amusing and memorable sensation. If a man at one end of the bridge offers you an umbrella, or a parasol, to keep off the sun's rays during this promenade, saying that you can leave it

with a friend at the other end, don't take it. The other who would take it from you may be prevented from doing so by a Spanish gendarme or a customs official, who indeed is just as likely to catch you first. The fine is "easy" enough for this illicit traffic, but the international complications are many and great. So, too, will be the inconveniences to yourself.

Around the Pont International, on both the French and Spanish sides, is as queer a collection of stray dogs and cats as one will see out of Constantinople. They are of a "*race imprécise, vraies bêtes internationales,*" the custom-house officer tells you, and from their looks there's no denying it. They may not be wicked, may only bark and not bite, mew and not scratch, but only they themselves know this. To the rest of us they look suspicious.

From Hendaye one may enter Spain by any one of three means of communication, — by railway, on foot across the Pont de Béhobie, or by a boat across the Bidassoa. The first means is the most frequented; for a *piécette* — that is to say a *pièce blanche* of Spanish money, which has the weight and appearance of a franc, but a considerably reduced value — one can cross by train; a boatman will take you for half the price at any time of the day

or night; and by the Pont International, it costs nothing.

This international bridge belongs half to France and half to Spain, the post in the

The Frontier at Hendaye

middle bearing the respective arms marking the limits of the territorial rights of each.

This is one of the most curiously ordained frontiers in all the world. The people of Urrugne in France, twenty kilometres distant from the frontier, can hold speech freely in their mother tongue with those of Feuntarrabia in Spain, but officialdom of the customs and railway organizations at Hendaye and Irun, next-door neighbours, have to translate their speech from French to Spanish and vice versa,

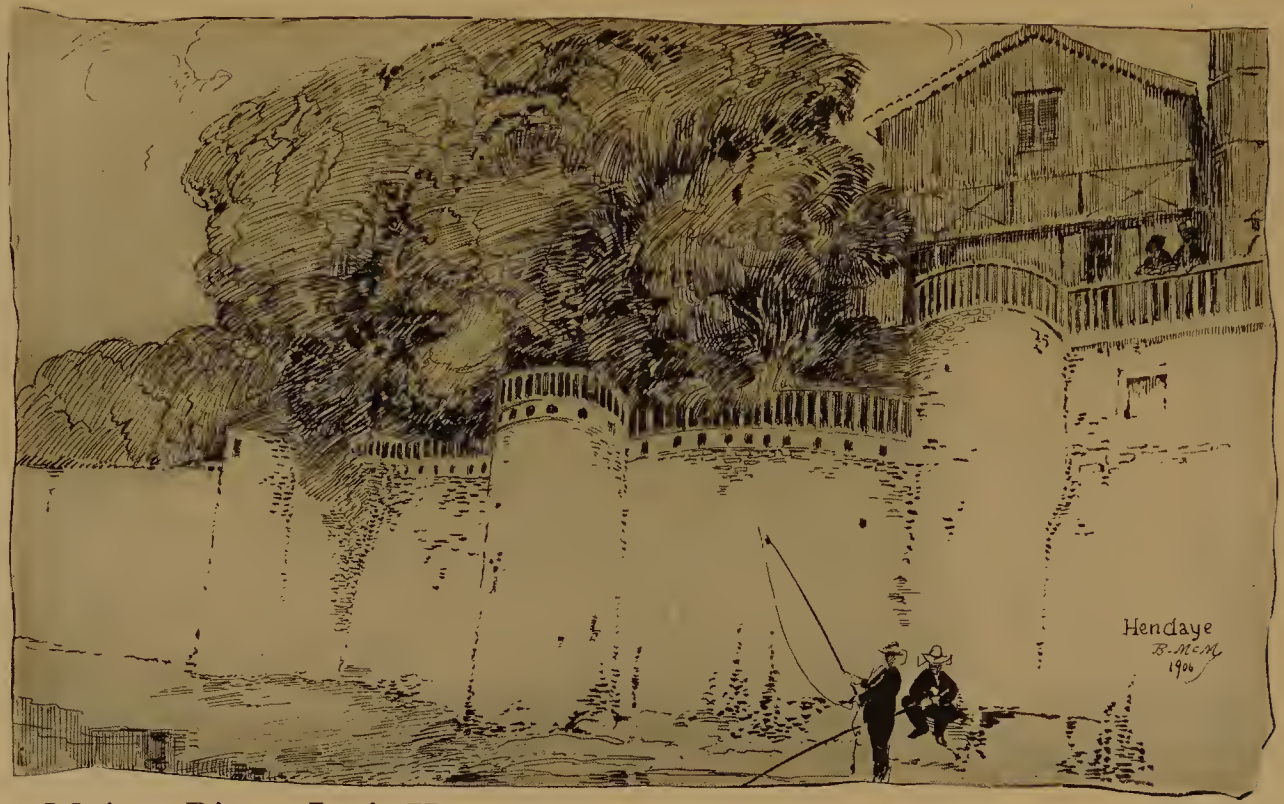
or have an interpreter who will. Curious anomaly this!

Hendaye's chief shrine is a modern one, the singularly-built house, on a rock dominating the bay, formerly inhabited by Pierre Loti, though most of his fellow townsmen knew him only as Julian Viaud, Lieutenant de Vaisseau. This, though the commander of the miserable little gunboat called the "*Javelot*" stationed always in the Bidassoa was an *Académicien.*

At the French entrance to this important frontier bridge one reads on a panel PONT INTERNATIONAL; and at the Spanish end, PUENTE INTERNACIONAL; and here the *gendarme* of France become the *carabiniero* of Spain.

Béhobie, at the Spanish end of the bridge, the French call "the biggest hamlet in Europe." It virtually is a hamlet, but it has some of the largest business and industrial enterprises in the country, for here have been established branch houses and factories of many a great French industry in order to avoid the tariff tax imposed on foreign products in the Spanish peninsula. The game has been played before elsewhere, but never so successfully as here.

On the Pointe de Ste. Anne, the northern



Maison Pierre Loti, Hendaye

boundary of the estuary of the Bidassoa, is a monumental château, the work of Viollet-le-Duc, built by him for the Comte d'Abbadie. Modern though it is, its architectural opulence is in keeping with the knowledge of its builder (the greatest authority on Gothic the world has ever known, or ever will know); and as a combination of the excellencies of old-time building with modern improvements, this Château d'Abbadie stands quite in a class by itself. At the death of the widow of the Comte d'Abbadie, the château was bequeathed by her to the Institut de France.

The view seaward from the little peninsula upon which the château sits is marvellously soft and beautiful, and what matter it if the fish of the Golfe de Fontarabie to the south have no eyes — if indeed his statement be true. No oculist or zoölogist has said it, but a poet has written thus: —

> "Le poisson qui rouvrit l'œil mort du vieux Tobie
> Se joue au fond du golfe où dort fontarabie."

Near by is the Forêt d'Yraty, much like most of the forests of France, except that this is all up and down hill, clinging perilously wherever there is enough loose soil for a tree to take root.

The inhabitants tell you of a "wild man"

discovered here by the shepherds, in 1774, long before the days of circus wild men. He was tall, well proportioned and covered with hair like a bear, and always in a good humour, though he did not speak an intelligible language. His chief amusement was sheep-stealing, and one day it was determined to take him prisoner. The shepherds and the authorities tried for twenty-five years, until finally he disappeared from view — and so the legend ends.

Across the estuary of the Bidassoa, in truth, the Baie de Fontarabie, the sunsets are of a magnificence seldom seen. There *may* be others as gorgeous elsewhere, but none more so, and one can well imagine the same refulgent red glow, of which historians write, that graced the occasion when Cristobal Colon (or his Basque precursor) set out into the west.

In connection with all this neighbouring Franco-Espagnol country of the Basques, one is bound to recall the great events of these last years, both at Biarritz, and at San Sebastian, across the border. The cachet of the king of England's approval has been given to the former, and of that of the king of Spain to the latter. Already the region has become known as the *Côte d'Argent,* as is the Riviera the

Côte d'Azure, and the north Brittany coast the *Côte d'Emeraud.*

It was here on the *Côte d'Argent* that King Alfonso did his wooing, his automobile flashing to and fro between St. Sebastian and Biarritz, crossing and recrossing the frontier stream of the Bidassoa. Bridges of stone and steel carry the traffic now, and it passes between Irun and Hendaye, higher up the river, but in the old days, the days of François I, the passage was more picturesquely made by ferry.

Feuntarrabia is but a stone's throw away, sitting, as it were, desolate and forgotten on its promontory beyond the sands, and as the sun sets, flinging its blood-red radiance over sea and shore, the aspect is all very quiet, very peaceful, and fair. It is difficult to realize the stirring times that once passed over the spot, the war thunder that shook the echoes of the hills. May the bloody scenes of the *Côte d'Argent* be over for ever, and its future be as happy as King Alfonso's wooing.

At Feuntarrabia, but a step belond Irun, one enters his first typical Spanish town. You know this because touts try to sell you, and every one else, a lottery ticket, and because the beggars, who, apparently, are as numerous as their tribe in Naples, quote proverbs at your head.

You may understand them or you may not, but since Spain is the land of proverbs, it is but natural that you should meet with them forthwith. Here is one, though it is more like an enigma; and when translated it becomes but an old friend in disguise: —

"Un manco escribio una carta,
Un siega la esta mirando;
Un mudo la esta leyenda
Y un sordo la esta escuchando."

"A handless man a letter did write,
A dumb dictated it word for word;
The person who read it had lost his sight,
And deaf was he who listened and heard."

One need not be a phenomenal linguist to understand this, even in the vernacular.

Feuntarrabia itself is a cluster of brown-red houses piled high along the narrow streets, with deep eaves over-hanging grated windows, and carved doorways leading to shady courts.

There is a certain squalid, gone-to-ruin air about everything, which, in this case, is but a charm; but one can picture from the blazoned stone coats-of-arms seen here and there that the dwellers of olden time were proud and reverend seigneurs.

Feuntarrabia, the little sea-coast town, called

In Old Feuntarrabia

even by the French *la perle de la Bidassoa* is contrastingly different to Saint-Jean-de-Luz, though not twenty kilometres away. It is Spanish to the core, and on the escutcheon above the city gate one reads an ancient inscription to the effect that it belonged to the kings of Castile and was always " a very noble, very loyal, very brave and always faithful city."

Feuntarrabia was once a fortress of renown, but that was in the long ago. It was a theatre of battles without end. Here Condé was repulsed, together with the best chivalry of France, and it was then that the grateful Spanish king ordered that for evermore it should be styled " the most noble, the most leal, the most valorous of cities " — a title which does actually appear on legal documents unto this day. The Duke of Berwick, King James Stuart's gallant son, once succeeded in taking the place, and it was then so utterly dismantled by the French that it has never since been reckoned among the fortified places of Spain. But the city must indeed have felt the old war spirit stir again when it beheld those two great generals, Soult and Wellington, strive for victory before its hoary walls in 1813. Inch by inch the British had forced Napoleon's men from Spain; and here on the very frontier of

France, Maréchal Soult gathered his forces for one last desperate stand. No British foot, he swore, should dare to touch the soil of France. But one chill October day, when the rain was falling on the broken, trodden vineyards, and the wind came moaning from the sullen sea, the word was given along the English ranks to pass the Bidassoa. And across the river came a line of scarlet fighting men, haggard and war-worn, many of them wounded, all of them weary. The result of that day is written on the annals of military glory as "one of the most daring exploits of military genius." Long afterwards Soult himself acknowledged it was the most splendid episode of the Peninsular War.

THE END.

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